

[*Roman Catholic*]!

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T H E

Great Duties of Life.

In Three P A R T S.

- I. With Respect to the Supreme Being.
- II. With Respect to the Laws of Morality.
- III. With Respect to the Law of Christ.

E X A M I N E D

By the Standard of *Right Reason*, and established on the most *Natural Dictates* of it, against the DEISTS, FREE-THINKERS, and other MODERN INFIDELS.

W H E R E I N,

All their *Objections* against the *Existence of Evil*, *Providence*, a *Future State*, the *Immortality of the Soul*, *Rewards* and *Punishments* of the *next Life*, and the *Divine Institution of Christianity*, are set in all the Light they deserve; and shewn to be *Vain* and *Illusory*, when compared with the most just and forcible Reasons, for the *Obligations of Religion*, both *Natural* and *Revealed*.

W I T H

A P R E F A C E, shewing the dismal Effects of INFIDELITY and IRRELIGION, from the Beginning of the World, down to this present Generation.

By S. B. Gent.

Si Pater ego sum, ubi est honor meus? Et si Dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus?
MAL. i. 6.

L O N D O N:

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T H E
P R E F A C E.



INFIDELITY and Irreligion may be reckoned among the principal Causes of the greatest Evils in the World, from the earliest Times. Not to enquire into the Particulars of the *Antediluvian* Abominations, by which all Flesh had corrupted their Ways, and provoked Almighty Justice to destroy the whole World in the universal Deluge; as it is Fact, that the Crimes of Men were the Cause of that ter-

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rible Judgment, so well attested by the most ancient Remains of History, both sacred and profane, as will be seen presently; so it is not to be doubted, but Infidelity and Irreligion (our present reigning Crimes also) had a very great Share in drawing it on their Heads. Whether, an universal Corruption of Morals was the Cause of their Infidelity; or rather, their Infidelity the Cause of such a general Corruption: When, like true Free-thinkers, they took the Liberty to laugh at all, that was sacred, delivered down to them from their first Parents; and to disbelieve all that could be inculcated to them, of what was to come; till they were abandoned to their own reprobate Sense, and the Vengeance of God overtook them in the Midst of their Impieties. What a terrible

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terrible Idea must this give us, both of the Enormity of their Crimes, and of a more than *infidel Stupidity*, which hardened their Hearts against all Impressions of Virtue and Piety, and shut their Eyes and Ears to the very Light and Voice of Nature; till the Earth was no longer able to bear the Weight of their Crimes, nor Heaven to endure the Sight of them.

THIS dreadful Punishment, the most signal that ever fell upon Vice and Irreligion, is so far from being an Engine of Priestcraft, as our modern Free-thinkers would insinuate, that almost every Nation on the Earth has had some traditional Knowledge of it; and the most ancient heathen Writers have touched upon it; who were no more Friends to revealed Religion, than themselves. The Testimonies

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of these ancient Writers may be seen in *Josephus* against *Appion*, *Lib. i.* & *Lib. Antiq. c. 4.* *Eusebius Præpar. Ev. Lib. i. 9. c. 12.* *St. Cyrill. Alex. con. Julian.* *St. August. de Civitat. Dei, Lib. xviii,* &c. besides the historical Account of the *Old Testament*, which the most hardened Free-thinker cannot deny to have been the most carefully and religiously preserved, of any History in the World: As the Motives for its Preservation are the most just and forcible of any, that can be assigned. Some of these Testimonies shall be here translated for the Benefit of the Reader, to shew, that they are the Free-thinkers, not the Christians, that impose upon the World, when they would call that sacred Truth in Question.

1. BE-

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I. *BEROSUS* the *Chaldean*,
of whom *Josephus* says thus, “ This
“ *Berosus*, says he, following the
“ *most ancient Records*, gives the
“ same Account of the Deluge,
“ and the Destruction of the World
“ by it, as *Moses* does; and of the
“ *Ark*, in which *Noah*, the Au-
“ thor of our Race, was preserved,
“ when it rested on the Top of
“ the Mountains of *Armenia*. *Et*
“ *Lib. Antiq.* Of this Deluge, and
“ of the *Ark*, the Writers of *Bar-*
“ *barian* [or foreign] History make
“ mention; and among these *Be-*
“ *rosus* the *Chaldean*: For in his
“ Account of the Deluge he writes
“ almost in these Words: *Part of*
“ *this Vessel* [or *Ark*] *is said to re-*
“ *main on the Mountain of the*
“ *Gordicæans*; and that the Peo-
“ ple of the Place scrape off the
“ Pitch, and carry it along with
A 4 “ them

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“ them by Way of Charm. The
“ same Things are mentioned by
“ *Hieronimus* the *Egyptian*, who
“ wrote the Antiquities of the
“ *Phœnicians*; and by *Mnaseas*,
“ and many others. *Nicolaus Da-*
“ *mascenus*, says he, in his xcvith
“ Book of *Universal History*, says
“ thus of the Deluge: There is a
“ vast Mountain in *Armenia*, call-
“ ed *Baris*, on which, according
“ to ancient Belief, many were sa-
“ ved in the Deluge; but particu-
“ larly, that one Person being car-
“ ried in an *Ark*, rested on the very
“ Summit of it; and that the Re-
“ licts of the Wood of the Ark re-
“ mained a long Time. This, in
“ my Opinion, is he, whom *Mo-*
“ *ses*, the *Jewish* Law-giver, men-
“ tions.”

2. *ABYDENUS* the *Assyri-*
an, apud *Euseb. L. ix. Præpar. Ev.*

c. 12.

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c. 12. “ To this Man, says he, af-
“ ter many others, *Sisythrus* suc-
“ ceeds in the Empire; who, up-
“ on *Saturn*’s foretelling that a vast
“ Flood should happen on the fif-
“ teenth of the Month *Desius*; and
“ commanding all Writings to be
“ secured, and laid up in *Helio-*
“ *polis* of the *Sipparians*; he o-
“ beying the Commands of the
“ God, immediately directed his
“ Navigation towards *Armenia*;
“ where he was overtaken with
“ the sudden Event of the Predic-
“ tion: For the third Day after
“ the Tempest ceased, he sent out
“ Birds to see if any Land re-
“ mained after the Floods; which
“ Birds finding nothing but an
“ immense Ocean, and no Place
“ to light on, fled back again to
“ *Sisythrus*. Others were sent out
“ in the same Manner: But when
“ he

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“ he had done the same the third
“ Time, and found what he desired;
“ red; for the Birds returned with
“ their Wings besmeared with
“ Mud, the Gods carried him
“ from the Sight of Men; but
“ the Vessel [or Ark] arriving in
“ *Armenia* supplied the Inhabitants
“ with Charms made of the
“ Wood of it, to hang about their
“ Necks, &c.”

N. B. *Sisythrus*, *Ogyges*, and *Deucalion*, seem to be only different Names, which the ancient Heathens gave to *Noah*.

3. *MELO* also in his Work against the *Jews*, as *Alexander Polyhistor* relates, quoted by the same *Eusebius*, and by *Cyrill. Alex.* says, that “ a certain Man having escaped the Deluge, with his Sons,
“ were drove out of *Armenia*-----
“ and retired to the desert Mountains

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“ tains of *Assyria*. The same *Po-*
 “ *lybistor*, *apud* *Cyrill. con. Juli-*
 “ *an.* says, That, on the Death of
 “ *Oxiartes*, his Son *Xifurus* reign-
 “ ed eighteen Years; that it was
 “ said, the great Deluge happened
 “ in his Time, and that *Xifurus*
 “ [others call him *Sisythrus*] being
 “ forewarned by *Saturn* to *build*
 “ *an Ark* ----- was saved there-
 “ by.”

4. THE Divine *Plato*, as he is
 called, mentions the Deluge in his
 Book *de Legibus*; and the uni-
 versal Devastation it brought on
 the Earth: “ Which, says he, on-
 “ ly a few *mountainous Shepherds*
 “ could escape, who rested on the
 “ Top of the highest Hills; and
 “ were preserved, as a Handful
 “ of remaining *Seeds* of human
 “ Race.” *Apud Euseb. Præpar. Ev.*
Lib. xvii. c. 15. *Note*, the anci-

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ent *Jews* had a Tradition, that the *Descendants of Seth*, called in the Scripture the *Sons of God*, from whence *Noah* came, lived on the Mountains *separate* from the wicked Race of *Cain*: For which Reason, *Plato* might call *Noah*, and his Sons, *mountainous Shepherds*. The Foundation of which *Jewish* Tradition seems to be taken from the *Old Testament's* Account of the Sons of God being perverted by the Daughters of *Cain*, &c. That the general Corruption of the Wicked had invaded the pious Race of *Seth*, and brought on the End of all Flesh.

5. *LUCIAN*, in his Book *de Dea Syria*, gives a long Account of the ancient Tradition of the Deluge; which the *Greeks* confounded with *Deucalion's*; if that was not the same with
Noah's,

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Noah's, as is probable ; notwithstanding some Difficulties in reconciling the Epochs. “ I heard
“ in *Greece*, says he, what the
“ *Greeks* relate of that *Deuca-*
“ *lion* : This is what they say,
“ That the Race of Men at pre-
“ sent did not come from the
“ Beginning ; but that the first
“ Race was entirely destroyed----
“ -----of those first Men this is
“ what they mention : Being of a
“ *contumelious Kind, they perpe-*
“ *trated iniquitous Crimes* ; for
“ they neither observed their Oaths,
“ nor received Strangers, nor re-
“ lieved Suppliants : For which
“ Things a most grievous Cala-
“ mity fell upon them ; for im-
“ mediately the Earth poured out
“ a vast Quantity of Water ; then
“ immense Showers fell from the
“ Skies ; the Rivers likewise over-
“ flowed

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“ flowed their Banks without Mea-
“ sure, and the very Sea was transfused over the Earth, that all
“ became Water; and Men perished all of them. *Deucalion* alone
“ remained *for his Piety*-----
“ he was preserved thus: He put
“ the Women and Children of his
“ Household into an *Ark*, himself
“ going in with them ----- and
“ sailed all together in the Ark, as
“ long as the Waters were upon
“ the Earth, &c.” Which is more properly an Account of *Noah's* Flood, than any other.

6. *VARRO*, the famous *Roman* Historian, whose Works are unfortunately lost; but were extant in *St. Augustin's* Time, who quotes him in a great many Places in his Book *de Civitat. Dei*. Of this *Varro* all the Learned know what *Censorinus* says. *Varro* distinguishes

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guishes three Periods of Time; the first from the Origin of Men, till the *first Deluge*; the second from the first Deluge, till the *first Olympiad*; the third from the first Olympiad to us.

7. *POLYBIUS*, one of the most famous Historians of ancient Times; he wrote an Universal History of all the Wars of *Asia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*, from the first *Punick* War to the End of the second, was Contemporary and Companion of the great *Scipio Africanus*, and tells you, that he visited most of the Kingdoms, Nations, and Places, of whose Wars he writes. Speaking of the Origin of different Governments, he mentions incidentally the general Belief of the Deluge, which reduced the Race of Men to a few remaining Seeds. The Author had
not

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not the *Greek* by him, but an old *English* Translation, printed above a hundred Years ago: His Words are, “ When Mortality fell upon
“ *Mankind by Inundation of Wa-*
“ *ters* [or general Deluge] ----- as
“ *we have understood hath been*
“ ----- all Institutions and Arts
“ *were then lost*: And when *again*
“ the Multitude of Men hath, by
“ Succession of Time, taken In-
“ crease, as it were from some *Re-*
“ *mainder of Seed, &c.*” *Poly-*
bios, Lib. vi. Hist.

8. THE celebrated *Bochart*, one of the most judicious and curious Searchers into ancient History these latter Ages have produced, in his *Geographia Sacra*, a Work of such immense Learning and Pains, that one might wonder, how it was possible to collect such hidden Remains of Antiquity; not only
brings

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brings most of the foregoing Testimonies, but proves the Truth of the Deluge from so many Monuments of ancient History, from the Symbols and Hieroglyphicks of the Ancients, from the Names of Places, Mysteries of the ancient Fables, Tradition of the Eastern Nations, down to the *Greeks* and *Romans*, that it surprizes one to find Persons pretending to Learning should call it in Question. See the first four Chapters of his *Geographia Sacra*.

IT were needless to mention *Ovid*, who gives us such an elegant Description of the Deluge in his *Metamorphoses*; and what is more, not only he, but most of the ancient heathen Writers, attribute the Cause of that dreadful Judgment to the Crimes of Men; which Crimes, and universal Cor-

a ruption,

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ruption, undoubtedly were derived originally from not hearkening to the Voice of God, and the first Principles of Religion inculcated to them by their first Parents; with other Ways and Means, by which they might have known, what was to be done, and what was to be avoided. Thus, the most dreadful Punishment, that ever was inflicted on a wicked, incredulous World, is delivered down to us by such an universal Tradition, and such concurring Testimonies of the most ancient Writers, sacred and profane, that it may be almost called *the Vox Populi* of the whole Earth.

BUT all the Waters of the Deluge could not wash away the Effects of Infidelity and Irreligion in the subsequent Race of Men. * Free-thinking

^a Bochart, in his *Canaan*, proves, that the Origin of all the heathen Idolatry first sprung from the Descendants of *Cham*.

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thinking and Free-acting in a short Time sprung up again; and introduced such brutal Enormities over the Face of the whole Earth, where true Religion was wanting, that none but *no Thinkers at all*, as Dean *Swift* calls the Free-thinkers, can be ignorant of the Cause of it. The like Infidelity and Irreligion had the like Effects among the Sons of Men, soon after the Flood. What heathenish Abominations and Brutalities overflowed the Face of the Earth, for Want of Faith and Religion? What stupid Blindness in worshipping Stocks and Stones, worse than the savage *Hottentots*? Except in a Handful of Men, who preserved the Religion of their Fore-fathers.

WHEN *Nimrod*, the mighty Hunter, began the first Empire of the World, Rapine and Violence laid

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the Foundation of it; but when the unnatural Sin of Idolatry was introduced, What a Train of horrid Rites flowed in upon the World? What Tribes of Gods and Goddeses, whose Actions were rather a Blot upon Nature, than befitting Deities; what inhuman Sacrifices, what abominable Ceremonies, were ushered in, and practised in every Kingdom and Nation, by the Generality of the People, even in the more polite Governments; and that too, by the Encouragement and Example of their Governors; that neither the tyrannical Power of the *Assyrians*, nor the effeminate Arts of the *Persians*, nor the heroick Valour of the *Grecians*, nor the ambitious Policy of the *Romans*, ever endeavoured to reform the Corruptions attending their heathenish Rites; but on the contrary,

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trary, as their Empires grew more powerful, greater Exorbitances were seen in their Morals. But when we consider the more remote Parts of the World, and the savage *Barbarians* in the Extremities of it, even to this Day, where Christianity was never known, we are astonished, that human Nature could be so deplorably blind: Whoever has but a Glimmering of History, must know, that this was the real State of the World, from the first Division of Nations, after the Deluge, till the Beginning of Christianity: It was that Divine Religion alone, that could reform the World; it was that made Men, I may almost say, rational, instead of brutal Savages; and nothing but that could stem the Torrent of such universal Corruption. Let our modern Unbelievers but re-

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flect on what they read in the ancient Poets, and other Accounts, about their Gods and Goddeffes; the inhuman Sacrifices of *Moloch*, of the *Carthaginians*, of the *Dru-ids*: In fine, the general Practices of all the Nations of the Earth, except the *Jews*, and some few here and there; and tell us, whether they can be called rational; or what was the chief Occasion of them originally, but Want of true Religion^b.

HITHERTO we have considered the unnatural Crimes and Abominations, the World was involved in, before the Coming of Jesus Christ; more contrary to the Light of Nature, than *Egyptian* Darkness, as will be demonstrated
in

^b See the Accounts of the Genealogy of the Gods; the Anthologia of the *Roman* Rites and Ceremonies; with the Histories of the Ancients, *Greeks* and *Latins*, *passim*; as well as the Accounts of the ancient Fathers, of the heathen Abominations, where even Vices were deified, &c. down to the Coming of Jesus Christ.

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in its proper Place ; which, nevertheless, I hope, our present Unbelievers will neither deny, nor justify ; unless they will acknowledge themselves almost worse than Savages ; if they deny them, they must deny all ancient History ; if they justify them, they must maintain the most monstrous Crimes to be rational. Let us now consider, what are the Effects of Infidelity among us at present, and what they are like to be, if once this Holy Law of Christ comes to be banished from our Hearts ; as it is already ridiculed, and made a Jest of, by Thousands, in the Face of the World. It is deplorable Matter of Fact, that since those inseparable Companions, Free-thinking and Irreligion, came among us, there is scarce any Crime, unless it be Idolatry, because it fa-

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vours of some Religion, but what is committed, not only without Scruple, but even justified by Numbers of our modern Libertins. Do not Thousands make a Jest of all Laws, Divine and Human, *as to the internal Obligation of them?* Is there any Thing, but coercive Laws, or their own Interest, Safety, and Reputation, that keeps them within any Bounds of Duty? Do not they impugn the very Existence of moral Evil? The very Light of Nature, and all moral Duties whatsoever? Is there any Thing so sacred, but what they scoff and sneer at in their Writings and Discourses? A very moderate Conversation, and Knowledge of the World, will discover Persons of all Ranks, who would make you believe, it is no more Harm, that is, Sin, to commit the greatest Crimes,

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Crimes, than to drink a Glafs of Wine: And can we wonder, if their Practices tally with fuch Principles? If we turn our Eyes to the prefent State of Morality among us, Can we affign any Commonwealth, in all the Extent of Hiftory, where more Immoralities were practifed, than among this Free-thinking and Free-acting Race? As they imitate the Heathens in their Infidelity, fo they imitate them in their Crimes. What Perjuries, Subornations, Villanies, and Corruptions of all Kinds, fuch as the moral Heathens would blufh at, are perpetrated without any interior Scruple and Remorfe; when Remorfe itfelf, and all Cries of Confcience, are ridiculed with Impunity? What univerfal Lewdnefs, almoft without Rein or Curb, if not authorized, is at leaft tolerated in the very Face
I of

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of the Sun? Where our Prostitutes are more daring, than the ancient Votaries of *Venus*. Open Brothels are kept in every Quarter of the Town, under the very Nose of our Magistrates; Thousands and Thousands of those abandoned Creatures run publickly through the Streets, drawing in our Youth to their Destruction, with such Discourses and Actions, the greatest Debauchèe would blush at; infamous Songs, expressing the most horrid Things, are sung to listening Crowds of both Sexes, who suck in the Poison, and corrupt their Hearts, before they know what Evil is. It is impossible to enumerate the Misfortunes, and evil Consequences of this one Sin of Lewdness, so shamefully tolerated among us. The greatest Plague, or the most destructive
War,

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War, could scarce cause such Havock among our Youth, as this one Crime does: Beside the Danger of corrupting our Wives, Daughters, and nearest Friends and Relations; the Ruin of Estates, Health, and Constitution; the Vitiating our Race, Tainting our Breed, Bastardizing Families, and the like. Beside this, How many, I may almost say, Millions of Conceptions are hindered, or destroyed in one Year, by the promiscuous Copulation of common Prostitutes and Misses? I do not say, that all these are Free-thinkers, or that all wicked Persons are come to that Height, as to throw off all interior Checks of Religion, or that such Crimes are confined to one Nation more than another: But any serious Thinker may see, that such a general Corruption of
Morals

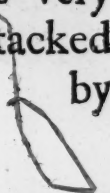
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Morals never came to such a Height, till this new System of no Religion began to spread. Nor can we so much wonder at it, when we reflect, that the Holy Law of Christianity, which by its Divine Precepts once retrieved the World from such horrid Disorders, begins to be banished from the Hearts of Men, both in Theory and Practice. This Want of Christianity is undoubtedly one of the greatest Causes of such reigning Wickedness. It is in vain to say, that the World always was wicked, and always will be so; this will only enforce the Charge against our modern Unbelievers: For if this sacred Law, which, by the Purity and Sanctity of its Maxims, had such Effect in reclaiming the World; that sacred Law, that was promulgated to enforce the Obligations of
natural

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natural Religion, and to elevate our Minds to greater Sanctity; that sacred Law, that teaches us to live piously, justly, and soberly, with respect to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves: If this sacred Law, I say, cannot keep wicked Persons within due Bounds, What an Inundation of Evils must overflow, when it is rejected, ridiculed, and banished from the Hearts of Men!

ON this Account it should seem a Duty incumbent on Persons of all Degrees and Stations, to put a Stop to such ruinous Principles: The Governors and Prelates of the Church should guard against them, as Super-Intendants over the Flock of Christ; whose spiritual Welfare they are to provide for, by the sacred Charge they have undertaken: Particularly, when the very Vitals of all Religion are attacked
by



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by such Principles. The Legislature and Civil Magistrate ought to guard against them; since, whoever takes away all internal Obligations of Religion, and Checks of Conscience, destroys one of the strongest Barriers of our Lives and Properties. Divines, and Preachers of the Word of God, ought to guard against them in their Writings and Discourses, to shew the Danger, as well as Inconsistence, of such a Sect, which saps the Foundation of Nature, and would extinguish those Lights, which Faith and Reason give us for the Conduct of our Lives. In fine, all Persons, capable of it, ought to make a Stand against a Sect of such pernicious Tendency, as they value the Innocency of their Children and Posterity, whose Morals will certainly be perverted, by such

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horrid Tenets, gaining Head every Day among us.

THESE were the chief Motives, that induced the Author to undertake the following Treatise; to contribute his *Mite* towards the Good of the Whole. Having had the Opportunity of conversing with Books and Men for many Years, and observed the pernicious Seeds of Infidelity to be scattered abroad in publick Books and Discourses, either sily insinuating, or impiously asserting, the Nullity of all internal Religion; he thought it a Duty to join his Labours with so many pious and learned Men, who have wrote on the Subject: That, as different Men have different Ways of Thinking, though tending to the same End; and as our modern Infidels attack Religion in the different Branches of it; he chose

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chose the Defence of the *rational Part*, to shew, that whoever endeavours to destroy the Duties of Life, either Natural or Revealed, must act, and talk, inconsistently with right Reason; one might say also, inconsistently with human Society.

HE has industriously avoided all Disputes between Christians and Christians of any Denomination; but confined himself to those between Christians and Infidels, or rather Apostates; since the modern Adversaries of Christianity are chiefly those, who were educated in its Bosom, and received so many Advantages from it. He has also been cautious, not to enter into any scholastick Disputes between Christians of the same Persuasion; not to impose his own private Opinions on any one; but
to

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to maintain those, that are impugned by our common Adversaries; and to what shameful Concessions and Consequences they are reducible, may be seen in the Body of the Work.

FINALLY, He assures the Reader, that he is so far from laying any Thing to their Charge, they are not guilty of, that there is not any Thing delivered as their Tenets, nor any Objection against Faith or Morals, but what he has either read in their Books, or heard in their Discourses: Nay, he should be ashamed to blot his Paper with all the Blasphemies and Impieties, he has heard in publick Companies, against all that is religious or sacred: The very Existence of the Supreme Being is not spared by some; others blaspheme his Divine Attributes; others laugh at all the

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Obli-

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Obligations of Morality; the most moderate make a Jest of all Revealed Religion; that he appeals to almost every one's own Knowledge, what they have seen and heard of the impious Tenets of some People, and the Necessity there is of making Head against them. But still, according to that golden Rule of St. *Augustin*, *Love the Men, destroy the Errors*: Neither has he the least personal Pique against any Sect whatsoever.

As for Free-thinkers, it is hard to know what Species they are of; they invented that equivocal Name, under the specious Pretence, that those who are born *free*, ought to think *freely*; the Fallacy lies in the Abuse of the Word; for undoubtedly every Man is free to examine the interior and exterior Grounds of his Belief; this very
Treatise

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Treatise does so; and shews, that if we make a just and natural Use of Liberty and Reason, we shall find all the Obligations of Religion to be grounded on the justest Dictates of it. Free-thinking, then, in the abusive Meaning of the Word, is to *think away*, what they please; first they began to think away any Part of the Scripture they did not like; then to doubt of the Foundation of it; then to reject all Revealed Religion; after that, they began to think away all Punishments, at least, of the next Life: When they had made themselves easy, as to the next Life, they were not such Fools, as not to make themselves easy in this: For, say they, if there is no Punishment in the next Life, What need we trouble ourselves about our Actions, whether they

b 2

are

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are good or evil? This will naturally make People think away all Obligations of Morality, and Ties of Duty whatsoever: Whether they will stop there, and what will be the Consequence of such Doctrine, one cannot tell; but every Reader is desired to *think seriously on it*.

To conclude this long Preface; One would wonder at, as well as deplore the Blindness and Perversity of Men, who will run away with a few specious Objections against the Law, and reject, or neglect the Evidences for it; making their Appeal to Reason, and yet act directly against it; if it were but for this obvious Consideration, *viz.* That in a Matter of such Concern and Moment, as the moral Duties of Life are, they must expose themselves to very great Dangers, if the Balance of Reason

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son were but only equal, for and against such Duties; but much more, when, by comparing their Objections against the Law, with the Evidences for it, we find the one, cannot come up to any just Proportion with the other: Then what must we say, when we consider the Deformity of Evil in it self, which they vainly extenuate, and would take away, to palliate their unnatural Liberties; and the Evidences, on the other Hand, for the Obligations of avoiding it, which they reject in Opposition to the first Principles of Nature: They cry out for Demonstration in Religion; But how is it possible, they should have any Demonstration on their Side, when such a Weight of Reason, and such a Cloud of Witnesses, are against them? For the first, the greatest Weight of Reason
son

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son we can have of practical Duties, the most necessary for human Life, is for the Obligations of Morality; and for the second, the greatest Cloud of Witnesses, as have hitherto been assigned for past Facts, are for the Divine Institution of Christianity; as will be seen in the following Treatise. Now, if the Balance of Reason is so evidently for the Obligations of Morality, they are to be attended to, and followed in the Duties of Life: And if the Gospel Facts are true, as recorded, those very Facts surpassing all the Bounds of Nature yet discoverable, and even contrary to the known Powers of Nature, evidently shew, that the Author of the Religion they establish, was immediately from God.

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ERRATA.

Page 24, line 21. for *Politicks* read *politick*. P. 110, l.
27. for *in* read *of*. P. 308, l. 14. for *borne* read *born*. P.
336, l. ult. for *Generally* read *Generality*.

T H E



THE
Great DUTIES
OF
LIFE, &c.

PART I. SECTION I.

INTRODUCTION.



HE first Article, both of our Creed, and our Duty towards God, that is, To acknowledge his Existence, is professed by the *Deists*, at least in Words, whatever may be their interior Sentiments.

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As an Atheist is taken for one, who denies the Existence of God; a Deist seems to imply the professed Acknowledgment of a Supreme Being; on which Account, the Deists ought to be as great Adversaries to the Atheists, as the Christians: They are not only obliged to answer the Objections of the Atheists, but must argue contradictorily to their Principles, when they object any Thing against Christianity; which, at the same Time, is inconsistent with the most just Notion, we can have of God. It is possible, some of the Deists may believe, interiorly, the more general Duties, with respect to God, their Neighbour, and themselves, while they reject all Revealed Religion: But, as the Generality of them, or at least, of those, who call themselves Deists, seem to have very little Regard to the Duties of Life, any farther than what concerns Self-Preservation, it will be proper to guard against every Species of that growing Sect, and establish the fundamental Duties of Religion, both Natural and Revealed, on the very Basis on which they pretend to ground their Natural System, as they are pleased to call it; that is, on the most evident Dictates of right Reason.

THE

Part I. of LIFE, &c. 3

THE Revealed Mysteries of our Religion are but Part of Christianity: The most laborious Part of it are the natural Duties of Morality, with respect to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves. It is to be feared, our modern Infidels are, in Effect, greater Enemies to these, than they are to the other; and reject Christianity, because it enforces those Obligations beyond any other System: It is very natural, therefore, to imagine, that a System enforcing the chief Duties of Life, with such surprizing Energy, must have the most Rational, as well as Divine Motives for it.

IF the Dispute between the Christians and Deists were to be decided by Numbers, both of Learned and Moral Men, the Advantage would be evidently on the Christians Side. There never was such a Body of Great and Learned Men, in all Respects, as always have been, and in all Probability will be to the End of the World, among the Christians. Are all these led by Prejudice of Interest and Education? Let our modern Infidels begin the Parallel when they please. Nor can it be any just Prejudice against Religion, that some Men of Sense and good Parts are Enemies to it. The most irrational Systems have had their Defenders. But the brightest Parts,

B 2

and

and Reason itself, may be abused; as is evident, not only in Heathens and Atheists, but in the Principles and Practice of some of our modern Infidels: And let Persons Stations, Parts, or Characters, be ever so elevated, it shews that Great Men may be as great Examples of the Weakness of human Nature, when it has no other Guide than itself.

BUT, as the Deists make their chief Appeal to Reason; and to hear the vast Encomiums they publish on that Head, weak Persons may be inclined to think, that their natural System were entirely agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason; the Christians will join Issue with them in that Respect, and will shew, that every Part of our Religion is agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason; and that to deviate from any Part of Christianity, is to deviate from the best established Principles of a rational Being. By this Appeal to Reason, they must agree in the following Points, by way of Preliminaries.

I. THOUGH the Deists, perhaps, are Scepticks in Religion; they ought not to be so in Reason: This were to destroy both Reason and Religion at the same Time. It is ridiculous to appeal to Reason, and yet, when it comes to the Push,

to say with some of our modern Infidels, *For all we know, Reason itself is but a mere Notion.* How can any one pretend to Reason, when he dares not rely on it, or believe himself in what he advances? For, if Reason itself be but a mere Notion, all the Deists Arguments *may be a grand Mistake*; and a Mistake of the most dreadful Consequence. In Effect, the Deists ought to be as much against universal Scepticism, as the Christians; because these have the Authority of the Supreme Being to support them in their Difficulties, whereas the Deists, if they give a Loose to universal Scepticism, must drop their Appeal to Reason.

II. HENCE, since both Sides must acknowledge the Authority of right Reason, they must also acknowledge, *first*, that there must be some Truth and Falshood in practical Points, as well as speculative. *2dly*, There must be some Certainty in our Judgments, with respect to this Truth and Falshood. *3dly*, In *Agendis*, or in practical Duties, where one Side or other is to be followed, a Person must be highly condemnable, who refuses to embrace that Side, to which the Balance of right Reason evidently inclines. *Lastly*, That this ought particularly to have Place in the great Con-

6 The Great Duties Part I.

cern of Religion: So that Truth and Certainty in Religion ought not to be looked upon as *indifferent Things*, by Persons pretending to Reason; on the contrary, they are the greatest Concern in Life; more especially, where the Enquiry regards the very Vitals, (if the Term may be allowed) of all Religion; as it does in this Dispute. By Consequence, they ought to be examined into with the greatest Care, and embraced, when found, preferably to all other Concerns.

III. As nothing is so prejudicial to Truth, as Prepossession in any Kind, both Sides ought to divest themselves of all Prejudice of Party, Interest, Education, or any other Motive capable of biasing the Judgment: Separating, as far as is possible, Realities from Appearances; and receiving no Impressions, but what the Dictates of right Reason shall approve of, either by its own direct Light, or assisted by an Authority evidently superior to it. The Adversaries of Religion will easily allow the Justice of this Preliminary, since their greatest Clamours are against Prejudices of Infancy, Education, &c. But surely, they will not be so unreasonable, as to deny, that there may be some Persons among the Christians, as sincere in the Search of
Truth,

Truth, as themselves; and a Truth too of the highest Importance. It is a great Sign of Want of Sincerity, or something else, if they will not allow, that some of the Learned Professors of Christianity may have Sense enough to see they are imposed upon, or Honesty enough to own the Imposture. It is, therefore, an evident Prejudice, in the Enemies of our Religion, to imagine, that the Christians either want sufficient Parts and Penetration to examine into the Truth of their Profession, or Candour and Sincerity to be ingenuously serious in a Concern, whereon, they are persuaded, their eternal Happiness, or eternal Misery, depends. But then,

IV. For an Equivalent, the Deists are obliged to examine the just Reasons, why the greatest Prejudices should lie on their Side; since it is more natural to lean towards Liberty, than to be led by the Nose by a Pack of Cheats and Impostors; as they would make us believe the Christian Teachers are. It is certain, the Enemies of Religion have all the Motives, that flatter our Passions on their Side; Motives much more capable of biasing the Judgment, and blinding our Reason, than all the Artifices of Priestcraft. They must, therefore, divest themselves of all Prejudices and Im-

8 The Great Duties Part I.

preffions, proceeding from a libertine Life
 and Conversation, from the perpetual Crav-
 ings of lawless Passions, depraved Appe-
 tites, enflaming Lusts, inviting Pleasures,
 &c. or shew, that all these are agreeable
 to right Reason. They must divest them-
 selves of that too natural Inclination Men
 generally have, of acting without Controul,
 and acknowledging no Law superior to
 their own Will. They must consider what
 Prejudices may arise from having their Ears
 eternally battered with lewd Discourses,
 blasphemous Railleries, sacrilegious Jest
 against Religion, and the Professors of it;
 where a profane Turn, with a little flashy
 Wit, is oftentimes all the Argument a-
 gainst the most sacred Truths. They
 must reduce their own Notions and Prin-
 ciples to the Examen, as well as those of
 their Adversaries: They must be desirous
 to be convinced of the Truth: They must,
 with an equal Hand, weigh the Reasons
 on both Sides, and consider, whether the
 Allurements of an uncontrollable Liberty,
 the Sweets of Pleasure, and the Incentives
 of Passion, are not as capable of turning
 the Scales, to throw off all Tyes of Reli-
 gion, as the pious Endeavours of our reli-
 gious Teachers are to make us good Chri-
 stians. An impartial Examiner will see,
 that

Part I. of LIFE, &c. 9

that there is something more Divine, as well as more Rational, in one, than the other. Men may be Libertines without any Pains; but to be a good Christian, is a laborious Task.

V. SINCE there will be frequent Occasion to speak of *Good* and *Evil*, *Right* and *Wrong*, it may be taken as a Postulatum, that they ought to be allowed in *Morals*, as well as the physical Part; because the same Reason, that assures us of *Truth* and *Falshood*, seems likewise to assure us, that there is something morally *Good*, and something morally *Evil*: Neither would it be an easy Matter for our Adversaries to shew a Disparity. But, since a great many of our modern Infidels dispute the Existence of moral Good and Evil, it will be demonstrated in its proper Place; provided it be allowed here, that natural Reason may be as capable of knowing Good and Evil, as it is of Truth and Falshood: To deny this, would be to take away the Use of Reason in the most necessary Part of it.

VI. As the Deists openly profess the Belief of a God, whatsoever directly follows from the just and natural Notion of the Deity, ought both in itself, and *Argumento ad Hominem*, to be looked upon, as evidently

dently demonstrative, in respect of the Deists; and that too, *à priori*. Hence, as God must be infinitely wise, powerful, good, and just in himself, he must be the same with respect to this and that Particular, &c. The Reason of this Preliminary will be seen afterwards.

VII. As the Subject of this Dispute is of the greatest Importance, since it concerns the greatest Obligations in Nature, it ought to be treated, and examined with the utmost Seriousness. Hence, the Deists ought to condemn all profane Scoffers at Religion, who make a Jest of the most Sacred Things, as entirely unworthy the Grandeur of the Subject; by which such profane Wits evidently discover, that their main End is to throw off all Tyes of Nature and Grace, rather than any Search of Truth, and would be rather frightened, than pleased at the Discovery of it. Not that all the Banter runs on their Side; since some of their Principles, or at least their Practice, would afford a very copious Occasion: But as some Men are not Knaves and Cheats because they are sharper-sighted than honest Men, but because honest Men will not be Knaves; so Men of Sense would not forfeit their Character,
by

Part I. of L I F E, &c. II

by making a Banter of the most august and serious Subject in the World.

LASTLY, As to the Scope and Method of the following Treatise; though the Deists hitherto have not established any formal System of their own, but rather contented themselves with making Excursions into the Christian Territories; the Design of this Treatise, is not only to establish the fundamental Principles of Religion, both Natural and Revealed, but to examine into any System our modern Infidels can frame against it: Where, after the indispensable Duties and Obligations flowing from the very Notion of a God, which, in Opposition to the Atheists, they are forced to acknowledge, are clearly demonstrated; the necessary Connexion these have with the general Laws of Morality, and, indeed, with Christianity, and the invincible Proofs for the Divine Institution of that Religion; it will appear beyond any rational Contradiction, that whatever Supposition the Deists can make, they must either be Christians, or Nothing; and even in that Nothing, they must act irrationally. But before we go any farther, it will not be improper to say something of the Origin and Causes of Deism.

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SECTION II.

The Origin and Causes of Deism.

WHETHER there may be any Persons of strict Morals among the Deists, who may be properly and interiorly virtuous Men, must be left to the Searcher of Hearts. It is certain, as was observed before, there are Numbers at present, who openly, in their Discourse and Actions, seem to set at Defiance all interior Obligations of Religion, both Natural and Revealed: And as this Work is designed to take in every Species of Infidelity, we ought to enquire into the Origin of such horrid Principles, and shew, that they are actually inconsistent with the most just Notions of a rational Being; whether we consider the *Supreme Reason* in God, or the Participation of it in his Creatures.

DEISM then, as far as it includes a Contempt of all Religion, and gives a Loose to *free Acting*, as well as *free Thinking*, is very nigh as old as the Creation. There were such before the Deluge, if the *Old Testament* be only allowed the Authority of an antient History, as undoubtedly
it

it is the most antient in the World. That venerable Record likewise informs us, ^a that when *Lot* was snatched away from among the *Sodomites*, and the Threats of God's speedy Judgments were thundered out against their Impieties, that free-acting Race made as much a Jest of it ^b, as the Free-thinkers do now of Religion. In *Job's* Time, ^c we read of wicked Persons, who said to God, *Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways*: And the Book of *Wisdom* gives us a very elegant Description of the profane Wits of that Age ^d: We have an exact Copy of it in the Language of our modern Infidels. Then for the Heathen World, the antient Historians and Poets inform us, that there were *Contemners* of the Gods and Men in all Ages. Not to mention the nocturnal Meetings of the *Bacchanals* related by *Livy* ^e, wherein such Numbers of the *Roman* Nobility of both Sexes were engaged; and the horrid Clubs of *Cataline*, mentioned by *Tully* ^f, and others: Great Part of such Impieties, not only continued down till the Institution of Christianity, but were revived, in some Measure, in the *Nicolaites*, *Gnosticks*, and

^a Gen. xix. 14.

qui, ib.

^e *Livy*.

^b *Vifus est illis quasi ludens lo-*

^c Chap. xxi. 14.

^f *Orat. in Cat.*

^d Chap. ii. 3, 4, 6.

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and other like Sects, down to the *Adamites*, *Muggletonians*, &c. who seem to have metamorphosed themselves into our Hell-Fire Clubs, and some other nocturnal Fraternities, not unknown in this grand Metropolis. But to the everlasting Infamy of Free-thinking, such horrid Principles never made such professed Progress, as in this present Generation. They seem to have established themselves into a formed and publick Body; and, indeed, make no inconsiderable Figure among the different Sects that people this Land. Infidelity is now defended, as a rational System: They give the soft Name of following the Dictates of unprejudiced Nature, to what the wisest Men, from the first Origin of the World, judged sacrilegious and impious.

FROM hence one may infer, that the first original Cause of Infidelity was an affected Desire of Liberty; particularly, that of free Acting, and throwing off all Sense and Tyes of Duty towards God and Man: That this was the main End of Free-thinking, is clear almost to a Demonstration, from the constant Tenor of the Discourse and Actions of Free-thinkers; and as it is extremely difficult to distinguish between a Deist, and a Free-thinker, it is highly probable, that the original Motives of both

were the same. But one may favourably presume, Men did not arrive to the highest Pitch of Impiety all at once: Some previous Steps and Degrees were required towards the Rearing a Battery, that was levelled at the very Foundation of Nature.

MEN first began to find their Passions extremely prone to what was then esteem'd Evil: The Limits of Nature seem'd quite too straight for their unbounded Desires: Rebellious Appetites growing high, wanted a Pretence to throw off the Yoke of all moral Duties; and as the Author of the Book of Wisdom said of the Libertines of his Time ², their Luxury had a Mind to let no Flower in the Field of Pleasure pass uncropt. At first several uneasy Rubs stood in their Way; Evil stared them in the Face with a ghastly Deformity; an in-bred Check of Nature kept them at some Distance; an interior Light shewed them the Beauty of Virtue, and the Deformity of Vice; and a secret Voice whispered them in the Ear, *that there were some Things not to be done*: But above all, a Notion they could not stifle, of some Sovereign Power calling them to an Account, rewarding *Good*, and punishing *Evil*, hung on their Spirits with a terrible Weight. Then they began to wish the Nullity of those

² Chap. ii. 7.

those Sacred Laws, which thus cramp their Inclinations, and ruffled their Desires: From Wishing, they began to contrive how they might evade those uneasy Checks, and find a favourable Solution for Principles, that seemed to be interwoven with their very Nature; but indulged Appetites and Passions still encreasing, one Disorder ushered in another, till Pride coming in to their Assistance, endeavoured to cloak their Impieties with the Appearance of Reason. Thus the very Barrier of Nature is broken down, all the Fences of Justice and Equity are laid open; the eternal Differences of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, are confounded together; and, as if they were making a new Creation in the moral System, the very first Principles of Morality are reduced into a *Chaos*: Whatever they have Power to do, becomes just and equitable; new Systems of no Religion are erected in Opposition to the most received Truths; in publick Companies, nothing is more frequent than such like Discourses: "Follow Nature; never baulk
 " your Inclinations in what they lead you
 " to; you may own a God, because you
 " cannot well deny it; but, at the same
 " Time, you may deny his most essential
 " Attributes, as his Providence over the
 " moral

“ moral Part of the World; his Justice
 “ and Equity in the Dispensation of hu-
 “ man Affairs; his Concern for his own
 “ Honour, &c. Never believe, or at least
 “ never think of, a future State; make
 “ no Distinction between Good and Evil;
 “ the first is but a Notion, the second a
 “ Bugbear to fright Children: Rewards
 “ and Punishments of the next Life are
 “ only Dreams of Enthusiasts; Hell and
 “ Damnation a Scare-crow of Priestcraft:
 “ Religion is a Jest, a mere Engine to lead
 “ People by the Nose; Rules of a good
 “ Life only so many Lures to draw them
 “ into the Trap:” With such other fine
 Things, they would impose on the World
 for Oracles of Reason.

As these, and such like, are the current
 Discourses, and, indeed, the chief Argu-
 ments of our modern Infidels, it is not
 far off a Demonstration, that this pretended
 natural System of no Religion takes its
 Origin from the above-mentioned Source,
viz. the Spirit of Liberty, or, more pro-
 perly, Libertinism. The Deists must take
 a great deal of Pains to convince us of the
 contrary; and that, not by their Words,
 but by their Lives and Practices.

ANOTHER main Cause of Deism, par-
 ticularly among the modern Deists, may
 C not

not improperly be attributed to the too glaring Inconsistencies of Atheism; which the most bare-faced Libertins scarce dare to patronize, as being too evidently against the Light of Reason. It does not seem to be a groundless Conjecture, that several reputed Deists could wish in their Hearts, there were no God, as well as no Religion, which, in Effect, comes much to the same; only they are afraid of the just Censure of the Wise Man, *i. e.* of being looked upon as downright Fools. Atheism now, in the Judgment of the most Learned, is like an old House; the more it is repaired, the more it falls in Pieces; whereas the Deists endeavour to evade that Imputation, and would be esteemed to act rationally in their Liberties; they know the Inconsistencies and Contradictions of such an impious System destroy itself, as soon as, it is set forth in its proper Colours. If the Reader desires a Summary of the invincible Proofs against Atheism, they may be seen in the following Paragraphs.

I. THE Necessity of acknowledging an all-wise, intelligent Cause of this glorious World, wherein the most just Ideas we can possibly frame, of Wisdom, Knowledge, Science, and all other Properties of a perfectly-intelligent Being, are so evidently
con-

conspicuous, in the exact Proportion between the Causes and Effects, in the Ends, Means, Designs, &c. so admirably concurring together, that all the Wit and Learning of Men, are rather lost in Wonder, than can possibly pretend to come up to them: I say, the Necessity there is of acknowledging such an all-wise, intelligent Cause, or else of being forced to reduce all the Beauties and admirable Effects of the Universe to the headlong Jumble of dull, stupid Matter, and inconceivable *Chance* (for one of the two must be granted) must put the Atheists to the last Stretch of Inconsistency. If they allow an infinite, intelligent Cause, that Cause is what we mean by God; if dull, stupid Matter, by a fortuitous Jumble, can answer all the Rules, Ends, and Designs of the most perfect Knowledge, and that too in the most constant Tenour of so many Ages, we must say, that the material World, or the senseless Particles of Earth, Stone, Wood, Water, Air, &c. (for the whole and every Part of them, is nothing but mere Matter still) contains more Art and Science, than all the Philosophers in the World; and when we must add, that *mere Chance* performed all these Wonders, it renders such a System ten thousand Times

more inconceivable. Such Lengths will Man's Corruption carry him, rather than be tied up to the Rules of Morality!

II. THE monstrous Notion of an infinite, eternal Series of Effects (such as the Generations and Productions of the World must have been from this Time upwards, if there were no God) without any *distinct Cause* of them, when we see no one Species, or even Individual, can be produced without such a Cause, is so highly absurd, that our Reason seems to reject the very Proposal of it; nor can any Man in the World give us an Idea of such an infinite Series of Effects, without a Cause: And to say, *that infinite Series is the Cause of that infinite Series*, is reducing it to one of the most childish Contradictions. Besides, if one single Effect, as a Man, for Example, cannot be produced by itself, but requires another Cause distinct from it; How can an infinite Collection of Men, Animals, &c. be produced without such a Cause? Now that distinct Cause of the glorious Effects conspicuous in the Universe, must be a Being of itself, receiving all its Perfections from no other; otherwise we fall into the same Absurdity of an infinite Series of Causes: By Consequence there must be an independent, distinct Cause

Cause of the Universe, containing all Perfections in itself, and of itself; which is the God of the Christians.

III. To suppose all Things contingent and indifferent in themselves, to *exist* or not *exist*; and yet, to be drawn originally from this State of Indifference, to their present State of Existence, by *Nothing*: Or else, on the other hand, to make all Things *necessary*, which Reason and Experience convince us, are in themselves *contingent* and *indifferent*; is to establish a Mystery more shocking to Reason, than any Thing they object against Christianity. Can any Man, acquainted with the Laws of Reasoning, pretend to affirm, that himself, or any other Effect of the Universe, implies a necessary Existence? If he does, why was not he himself from all Eternity? And why will he not live to all Eternity? If his Nature does not imply necessary Existence, what was it, that gave him his Existence? The same Questions may be asked of all created Effects *ab Origine*; particularly of mere Matter; How could it give itself Existence? Why not, all Perfections? If, according to them, the Supreme Being is not from itself, can mere Matter be? any Part of which will shew the absolute Inconsistency of Atheism. Wherefore, that fundamental

Point of Religion, with respect to God's Existence, being impregnable from all Attempts of Reason against it, a great many, who formerly might be accounted Atheists, seem to have taken Shelter under the Walls of Deism; from whence, if they are not driven out by downright Force, they may imagine they have made an honourable Retreat; whereas nothing but the most evident Demonstration on their Side can secure them.

THIS Conjecture, that modern Deism takes its Rise from the Ruins of Atheism, will be confirmed, when we come to find, that a great many of the Deists most plausible Objections against the Christians, indirectly at least, attack the very Godhead in his most essential Attributes: And, indeed, there seems so much Affinity between them; their Way of managing the Cause is so very like; the Dependance they have of one another; the Tenor of their Discourses and Actions; their Joint-Efforts to decry all Religion, with the rest of their Ends and Views, resemble so much of a grand Alliance, that it is very difficult, sometimes, to distinguish between their Principles, as well as Practice.

HOWEVER, as the Case stands, we will suppose, for the present, that the Deists neither give Shelter to the Atheists, nor
have

have established themselves on their Ruins; and in that View, shall consider them, as Persons, who ought to be as great Enemies to the Atheists, as the Christians. To give them their Due, some of them seem to speak with great Respect of the Sovereign Being; they will extol his infinite Majesty in Comparison of our Meanness; will acknowledge him in Words, as the Supreme Lord, and all-wise Governor of the Universe, infinitely above all created Beings; and, by that Means, endeavour to escape the shocking Prejudices the Generality of the World ever had against Atheism. But then, their pretended Principles will be found, on Examination, to be no more of a Piece, than the others; we shall find them extolling some of God's Perfections, and falling foul upon the rest; magnifying his Omnipotence, and denying his Providence; proclaiming his Goodness and Mercy, and divesting him of Justice and Equity: Which, in Effect, is making a Chimæra, instead of a God.

ANOTHER Cause of Deism, an occasional one at least, may be derived from the endless Disputes and Differences, with respect to the true Religion and Church-Government. There being, say they, so many different Sects among the Christians, so many contrary Systems, such unaccountable Te-

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nets of some People, such strange Perversions of the very Scriptures; every Body taking the Liberty to frame and chuse what Religion, or what Part of Religion, he pleases; and some, that of chusing none at all: So that in this Labyrinth of Opinions, where even a well-meaning Man may stagger, how to distinguish the Right from the Wrong, it is no Wonder, if some, allured by the Motives of an uncontrollable Liberty, take that Occasion to renounce all at once. To this we may add, that the Want of living up to the Purity of the Gospel, in the professed Members of Christianity, that Interestedness, Ambition, servile Ends, human Respects, scandalous Jugglings, and Prevarications, which are seen sometimes in those, who ought to be Lights to the Church of God, may give Occasion to the Deists to think almost in earnest, that Religion is nothing but a Shoeing-Horn, to draw on other Politicks and selfish Ends.

THESE Occasions of Deism, in a great Measure, proceed from our own Faults; though, on the other hand, it can be no lawful Plea for the Deist, or make a System, inconsistent with Reason, ever appear rational. It is a very illogical Inference, *Because some Persons contradict one another about Religion, and others do not live up to what*

what they profess; therefore there is no Religion at all. Such Inferences, though commonly enforced as Arguments with the Ignorant and Libertin, are unworthy Persons, who make their Appeal to Reason. By Consequence, Deism, if it can have any Support, must have something more solid to sustain it, than such a sinking Foundation.

THERE may be several other Occasions of Deism, with respect to particular Persons; such as, Want of good Instructions in their Youth; Prejudices of a more advanced Conversation, which are certainly more powerful and adhesive, when they flatter our Inclinations, than when they thwart them; a general Corruption of Manners, joined with an almost brutal Blindness, or at least, an affected one, in regard of the very first Principles of Morality; a Smattering in Philosophy and Literature, without penetrating into the real Causes and Reasons of the most sublime Subjects, which require the most serious Examination; where Persons often run away with first Appearances, without comparing them with more solid Principles, which entirely overthrow them; the Vanity of setting up a new Sect, and broaching new Opinions; the malignant Pleasure of contradicting the whole World, to shew
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their Wit, and the like : But these Causes being rather subalternate, than principal, a Hint may be sufficient.

As the Causes of this growing Sect are various, so, without Doubt, there are different Species of it ; like all other Sects of human Invention. No sooner is a System framed, but it branches out into a great many different Forms ; so that Deism has already fructified among us, under various Denominations ; which, for Method's Sake, shall be just touched upon in the following Section.

SECTION III.

Of the different Sorts of DEISTS.

IT is possible there may be some Deists truly such, who really acknowledge a God, and the chief Duties of Nature ; attracted by the intrinsic Beauties of Virtue, and an innate Bent of Temper and Constitution, which renders them social, benevolent, and moral Men. It would be injurious to human Nature, to imagine, that

that all Sense of Virtue and Morality can be entirely extinguished in it. There were such among the antient heathen Philosophers, who not only taught in their Discourses and Writings, but even practised in their Lives, a great many moral Virtues; and whose Examples might make many a Christian blush at the great Defects we find among them, so discreditable to the Sanctity of the Religion they profess. These *heathen Deists*, who believe no more than the old Heathens did, were there no other Species of them, would render the Dispute much shorter and easier; when, allowing all the natural Duties of Life, they require nothing more, than to have the invincible Proofs for Christianity set in their full Light. But, alas! the Number of these moral or heathen Deists is so very thin, that we find there are ten Times more, who deny the very Being of any Religion, than those that reject Christianity only. However, this barren System of natural Virtue could never convert the World, nor stop the almost universal Torrent of Corruption, which over-run the whole Face of the Earth, for want of something more divine to enforce its Obligations: Whereas the sacred Precepts of the Gospel made more moral Men in one Age, than

than all the heathen Philosophers, or their Successors, the heathen Deists, have done hitherto, or will do to the End of all Ages, should they last so long.

BUT it is undeniable, that there are other Branches of this new Sect, much more numerous than the former. Some of them may be called Atheistical Deists, though the Term seems to imply a Contradiction; that is, those who seem to be half one, and half the other; not openly denying the Being of a God, because they cannot withstand the Arguments for his Existence; but, at the same Time, deny his all-foreseeing Care of the World, particularly over *human Actions*; perhaps, for fear he should have an Eye over themselves. The Inconsistence of this Branch will appear, when the essential Attributes of the Supreme Being are explained; particularly, his Providence over the moral Part, as well as over the physical, or natural Part of the World.

THERE is another Species of Infidels among us, more dangerous yet, than the foregoing: These are *Machiavillian*, or *Politick Deists*, whose pernicious Maxims can lurk under any Denomination, and can make any Thing pass as lawful, provided it is expedient:
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Their chief Views have no other Scope, but that of Fortune, Interest, Grandeur, and Ambition; having their Heads perpetually full of Intrigues of Parties, Maxims of State, Schemes of Government, Vicissitudes of Revolutions, with all the dark and hidden Mysteries, that serve as so many Springs for them to run on; looking on Principles of Religion, and Maxims of Policy, to be only different Terms of Art; and consequently, as it serves their Turns, or suits with the Genius of the People, make them equally subservient to obtain their Ends. In a Word, they would make us believe they can see nothing in any Religion, but what is merely Human; and so would have it pass for a more refined Scheme of Politics. As these are the greatest Enemies, and, indeed, the very Bane of all intrinsic Virtue and Morality, so are they the most difficult to bring to any internal Sense of their Duty; neither will they make any Scruple of being of all Religions, when it serves their Turn; they would be *Jews* in the Synagogue; *Mahometans* in *Turky*; and if they were to be in the *Indies*, it is very likely, would not stick to fall down before the Devil. The Examples of so many wicked Men, in all States,

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States, is their greatest Argument; and it is equally difficult to make them think, seriously, of the intrinsic Reasons for Religion, as to practise it. These, in Effect, are the original Establishers of Priestcraft; for all they cry out so much against it: It is then chiefly to be feared, when Persons of such Principles get into the Church.

THERE are others, whom we may properly call *Libertine*, or *Animal Deists*, the greatest Herd of all; who being entirely abandoned to the sensual and animal Part, drink Iniquity like Water, as the Scripture elegantly expresses it; who, to give their Passions their full Swing, and to ingulph themselves in their brutal Abominations, with greater Security, have trod this indulgent System out of their own Filth, to lull their uneasy Thoughts asleep, and sooth the Remorses of a guilty Conscience, which will rebuke them sometimes, and startle at the Prospect of an approaching Futurity. This they do, either by sanctifying Vice itself, and turning the most horrid Brutalities into Peccadillos, not worthy God Almighty's Care; or else, casting the Blame on their most sacred Maker, for those lawless Appetites, they are resolved not to take any Pains to resist; though when their Passions begin to flag, and nothing but the
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Dregs of Vice remain behind, the most common Way to sooth their Conscience, is with a Shot, or a Dose of Opium, and so close the last Scene of Life, more unnaturally than they lived. One may add to this Class, those unthinking Wretches, who are chiefly wicked, because others are so; sputtering against Religion some impious Jest, they have got by heart, either because it is modish, or because they have a Mind to appear even worse than they are, or, in short, for want of a serious Thought. Your *Profane Wits* may also be reduced to this Class, who get together in Taverns, or worse Places, and as they practise none, so endeavour to talk one another out of all Religion; their chief Talent is to banter the most sacred Truths, making the Sublime of Wit to consist in the Sanctity of the Subject; and by an unparallel'd Elevation of Thought, dare to lash at the Deity, and level their blasphemous Railleries at his most essential Attributes.

It is too flagrant a Truth, that we have among us all these different Degrees of Infidels; particularly, since this new System of no Religion came in Vogue; of which all serious Persons ought to have the greatest Horror, and endeavour to overthrow it, in whatever Shape it appears; as they tender,

der, I will not say, the Religion of their Fore-fathers, but as they would preserve their Posterity from the Infection of such horrid Principles.

SOME People may imagine, that the *Socinians*, *Latitudinarians*, &c. ought to be ranked among the Deists; as the Tendency of some of their Principles is reducible to Deism; neither can a confused Blend of Contradictions, or a Hodge-Podge of different Religions jumbled together, ever be the Work of *Divine Revelation*: Nevertheless, they do not properly belong to Deism; at least, till they think fit to throw off the Mask; because they pretend, yet, to acknowledge the Divine Authority of the Scripture, and may be confuted by it, if they will only allow the most natural Sense of it to be decisive. But that requires a Discussion of another Nature.

PERHAPS the Reader may wonder, there is so little said yet of *Free-thinkers*; and what Class of Infidelity they belong to? Why, truly, it is hard to assign any particular Class; but they rather belong to all: Some of them would make one believe, that they are moral Men, and only take the Liberty to believe, or disbelieve, what they please; which very Profession
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evidently tends to the Destruction of all moral Duties, as well as Religion; for what Person, in his Senses, can persuade himself, that he who takes the Liberty of disbelieving all internal Obligations of moral Duties, will ever practise them, any farther than they serve to establish his Reputation, or to keep clear of the Laws? Nor will external Laws ever keep Men in Order; but that the most horrid Crimes may be committed with Impunity, if there were no internal Check to keep them in Awe. In all Appearance, it was on this Account the celebrated Dean *Swift*, in his Letter to a young Clergyman, says, that *Free-thinking*, in Propriety of Speech, is *no Thinking at all*, and that Free-thinking is made up of Vice and Inconsistence; which Assertions are but too much confirmed by the Discourses and Practice of most of the Free-thinkers one meets with in Town and Country. The true Meaning, therefore, of that pretty Name, is, *first*, To *think away* all internal Duties of Religion and Conscience; and, *2dly*, To give an entire Loose to *free Acting*; two of the most pernicious Maxims as ever were introduced in Church or State.

BUT to close this Section, without being obliged to particularize all the extravagant

vagant Reveries of corrupt Nature, there can hardly be any new Species of Infidelity, but what will be comprized, and confuted by the three following Heads, which will be proposed, as the principal Points to be decided between the Christians, and all our modern Infidels, except the Atheists; which last, as was observed before, are to be answered by the Deists, as well as the Christians; and, indeed, the Inconsistences of that impious System are so palpable, that scarce any learned Adversary ever took it in Hand, but who entirely overthrew it.

S E C T I O N I V .

The chief Points to be decided between the Christians and Deists.

Notwithstanding the various Species of Deism, mentioned in the last Section, it is difficult enough to assign any Thing positive in this new, pretended System of no Religion. The distinguishing Characteristick of it in general, is made
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up of Negatives, *viz.* in denying and ridiculing the very Being of all Religion; particularly Revealed Religion, and the Divine Institution of Christianity: But as it is ridiculous to build a System of mere Negatives, if they will not declare any positive Tenets of their own, it will be a Demonstration of the Weakness of their Appeal to Reason, when such Negatives are shewn to be both unnatural and irrational.

THE best Way to make this appear, will be, to reduce the Dispute to some determinate Heads, which all Persons of Judgment must allow to be necessarily decided one Way or the other; unless they deny the Use of Reason in the Direction of our Lives in such a weighty Concern; this would be the most shameful Evasion a rational Man can be reduced to. I am not ignorant the Deists would have the World believe, that the main Hinge of this Controversy turns on the Proof, or Disproof, of the Matter of Fact in the Divine Institution of the Christian Religion: It being only, say they, the Invention and Institution of Men, palmed on the World by a Pack of Priests, to work out their own politick Ends, by the deluded Bigottry of the Ignorant. But, besides

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that they take very little Pains to prove this daring Assertion, if they would stop there, the Dispute would be reduced to a less Compass; whereas, it is evident, by their impious Clamours and Behaviour, that they have further Views; that, in Effect, it is not so much the Divine Revelation at which they strike, as against the main Body of all Virtue and Morality; the first is but a Feint, the real Stab is aimed at the Rules of a good Life, and the very fundamental Laws of Nature.

IT is true, the Finger of God so conspicuous in the Institution of the Christian Religion, and the evident Proofs for it, if they were considered impartially, are sufficient of themselves to convince any Man living, of downright Folly, or the most prejudiced Obstinacy, who should act contrary to such authentick Testimonies, in a Concern of much less Consequence, than of Religion; as will be seen in its proper Place. But as the Law of Nature is the Basis of the Law of Christ, it is almost necessary to begin at the very first Principles of all, the Deists can call in Question, unless they will throw off the Mask in earnest, and openly declare themselves Atheists.

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IF there is any Thing positive in the System of the Deists, it is, that, agreeably to their Denomination, they do, or ought to acknowledge the Existence of a Supreme Deity. This Point being fixed, whatever they can farther call in Question, as to the Fundamentals of Religion, may be reduced to these three Heads.

I. WHETHER the Supreme Deity requires any Thing from us by way of Duty, Worship, Homage, &c. or in other Words, Whether there is not an obligatory Worship and Obedience due to God from Man.

II. WHETHER there is not an obligatory Duty in the Conduct of our Lives; or a Morality to be observed in our Actions, according to the most just Notions right Reason gives us of Good and Evil.

III. As to the Matter of Fact, Whether God has not sufficiently signified, declared, or, if they will bear with the Expression, *Revealed* his Will to us; and by an authentick Promulgation determined the Nature of his Worship, and the particular Points of our Obligation, in the Institution of the Christian Religion.

THESE three Heads will respectively comprehend the whole Strefs of the Controversy between the Christians and Deists

of all Denominations; the Decision of which, in the Affirmative, or Negative, all Persons of Judgment must acknowledge to be absolutely necessary: If there be an obligatory Worship due to God, Persons must be impious, who refuse it; if there be an obligatory Morality to be observed in our Actions, those must be wicked, who act contrary to it; if God has revealed his Will to us in the Institution of the Christian Religion, those must be Infidels, and Rebels to the Light, who deny it.

WHEN these Points are fully cleared up, with the Corollaries and Consequences evidently deducible from them, *first*, Not only the Essentials of the Controversy will appear evidently demonstrable on the Christians Side; but the greatest Part of other Difficulties, and Objections of less Consequence, will be easily removed; such as some seeming Incongruities above our Comprehension; Pickings and Cavillings at some particular Matters of Fact, with other intricate Doubts and Questions, which Reason alone cannot come at, or which Length of Time, and other Inconveniences, have rendered more obscure. It is manifest, when the Fundamentals are thoroughly established, such Difficulties ought to fall to the Ground, as needless Disputes.

Disputes. *2dly*, As they all three have a visible Connexion with one another; so the two First will contribute very much towards the Clearing of the Third; for beside that they make two Thirds of all Religion, both Natural and Revealed, one may charitably presume, if the Deists were but really sensible, that there is an obligatory Worship due to God from Man; that this Obligation does indispensably extend itself to the general Duties of Life; and, *finally*, if their Lives and Practice did but correspond with this Obligation, they would find less Difficulty in being Christians, and believing the Divine Institution of that Religion.

SECTION V.

*The first great Point considered,
viz. Whether there is any Wor-
ship and Obedience due to God
from Man.*

THE bare Proposal of this Point by way of Doubt, seems to clash with
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Reason at the first Hearing; but the Denial of it has the Aspect of something so horrid and deformed, that it gives a Shock to our very Nature; at least, to all who acknowledge the Existence of the Supreme Being. The more we contemplate the Divine Perfections and Attributes of God, his adorable Majesty, his omnipotent Power, his infinite Excellency and Fœcundity, the Fountain of all Beings in Heaven and in Earth, his all-governing Wisdom, his unerring Judgment, his all-equitable Justice, his boundless Goodness, with all that he has done for Man, and what one would think should be owing to him for his Benefits on our Side; the more we are penetrated with an interior Sense of Veneration, Submission, Obedience, Duty, Homage, or whatever is in our Power to pay him, in Testification of our Gratitude and Dependance in all Respects: So that the Affirmative of this important Question seems to carry a natural Evidence along with it, *i. e.* that there is an indispensable Worship and Obedience due to God from Man; neither do I think the more considerate Sort of Deists dare deny it in Terms. But this being a Point of greater Consequence and Extent, than some of them would have us imagine; and, lest any
should

should be so impious, as to object, that either these Notions are not universal, or may proceed from Prejudice of Infancy, Education, or the like, the Affirmative of the foregoing Question shall be proved from the most evident Principles, as being the original Foundation of all Religion: As it is the Glory of Religion to have such a Foundation.

THIS indispensable Worship due to God from Man, his Creature, and the Work of his omnipotent Hand, from whom he has received all he has, as the first efficient Cause; and on whom he depends for every Gasp of Breath, as the preserving Cause; for should he only withhold the Course of Nature, and second Causes, our System would soon perish, and fall to its original Chaos: I say, this Worship due to God, though one and the same in itself, may be considered under different Views; *first*, With respect to the Divine Attributes and Perfections of God demanding such a Worship, as his *inherent Right*, if the Term may be allowed, and his indisputable Prerogative over his Creatures. *2dly*, With respect to Man, his Handy-work, not only capable of it, but necessarily obliged to such a Duty. *3dly*, From the Justness and Fitness of the Thing in itself, agreeably to the

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the most just and perfect Reason in God. *4thly*, From the positive Will of God, which must require, what by his natural Right and Prerogative, is his Due. *Last-ly*, From the manifold Absurdities, and unnatural Consequences, following from the contrary. The Truth of the above-mentioned Point may be proved from all, and each of these Heads; which, by Reason of the Connexion they have with one another, inferring and enforcing each other, and the Truth in Question, from whatever Side we take a View of it, will render the Argument as conclusive, as Men pretending to Reason can desire.

THE Deists then, that they might disengage themselves from the contradictory System of Atheism, while they acknowledge the Existence of God, are obliged at the same Time, to acknowledge him, as the Maker, Preserver, and Governor of the Universe; or either shew some other Cause of it, which will be God, or mere Matter, which last is impossible: Or else prove to us, that it is out of God Almighty's Power to preserve, or *destroy* it; both which will be interpretative Atheism. These Points, therefore, being out of the present Question, by the Confession of a Supreme Being, they must acknowledge this God

to be *Ens absolute & summè perfectum*, as the incomparable Sir *Isaac Newton* lays down in the End of his *Principia Math.* the Justness of whose Reasoning surely they will not deny. God, therefore, must be (according to this great Philosopher, and, indeed, Truth itself) *a Being absolutely and infinitely perfect*; any other than this, is a Chimæra, and not the Supreme Being: From this undeniable Principle it follows,

1st, THAT God must have all absolute and unmixed Perfections requisite in the Supreme and Essential Being, *viz.* Necessary and Eternal Existence, absolute Independence, Immutability, Immensity, infinite Power and Virtue, as the first, universal Cause, containing all Things in his Divine Fœcundity, &c. It follows,

2^{dly}, THAT he must have all absolute and unmixed Perfections of an *intelligent Being*, infinite Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom, Judgment, Prescience, comprehending all that his Creatures can do, think, know, or design, past, present, future, and even possible, with all the real Exigencies, Natures, Dispositions, Reasons, Relations of Things, both in respect of himself, and one another; otherwise we might say he was ignorant of some Things, which

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which is inconsistent with the very Notion of God. It follows,

3dly, THAT he must have all absolute and unmixed Perfections of a Moral Being, *viz.* Goodness, Bounty, Fidelity, Veracity, Justice, Equity, Liberty of Choice, Election, Volition; willing all Things for the best, as well as seeing and knowing what is the best; impartial, just, and equal in all his Ways, as also requiring what is really due to him, and most fit to be done: I say, requiring, by the Manifestation of his holy Will to us, by those natural, or supernatural Lights, and other Helps and Means, as are consistent with Free-Agents; as will be seen afterwards.

THESE three Inferences, as they are demonstrable against the Atheists, either directly, or evidently consequential, so they ought to be undeniable in Regard of the Deists, unless they would be counted Atheists in Masquerade. But,

DOES it not equally follow from the same Principle, that all Worship, Duty, Obedience, Veneration, Homage, &c. is indispensably owing to him from Man, as the Superexcellent Being of all Beings, the universal Cause, Preserver, and Benefactor, from whom we receive all we have? If we were to stop here, nothing
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can appear more natural and necessary than this last Inference; and may be stated in the strictest Form of Argument in the following Manner, only considering God with respect to himself and his infinite Perfections.

THE Supreme and Superexcellent Being, infinite in Majesty, Wisdom, Justice, Sanctity, and, indeed, all other Perfections: The universal Benefactor, Preserver of all, essentially as such, imports, or, if the Term may be allowed, speaks an inherent Right in him, to exact and require an absolute Obedience and Worship from all his Creatures capable of it. God is this Supreme and Superexcellent Being of all Beings, the universal Cause, Benefactor, and Preserver of all Things; therefore, essentially as such, or from the very Nature and Exigency of his Divine Perfections, there is due to him an absolute and indispensable Worship and Obedience from Man.

WHOEVER calls any Part of this Argument in Question, may as well deny all other Truths, *i. e.* must be a downright Sceptick, which is inconsistent with an Appeal to Reason; so that, in Effect, it is mere trifling with Words and Terms, and establishing vain Sounds, and empty Notions, without Objects, or any real Signification,

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cation, if the Notion of the Supreme Being, the universal Cause, Father, Benefactor, and Preserver, &c. does not essentially infer an universal Right over his Creatures, with an indispensable Worship due to him, on that Account. All Mankind hitherto, when they have been talking of Right, Duty, Worship, Obedience, &c. have only made use of an unintelligible Jargon without either Sense or Meaning, if they do not belong to God, as the Supreme Being, infinite in all Perfections; one may ask them, What are the most natural and rational Ideas we can have of any Thing, if infinite Majesty does not demand the most religious respect? Infinite Sanctity, the most awful and holy Veneration? Infinite Bounty and Benefits, the most grateful Return and Acknowledgment? Infinite and omnipotent Power, an entire Dependance? Infinite Wisdom and Justice, an exact Subordination to it, as the most perfect Model by which his Creatures are to be directed? This Right to all due Worship and Obedience, as much belongs to his Divine Perfections, as these do to his Supreme Deity; so that the first, or major Proposition, must be true, if any Thing in Nature can be so; the second the Deists are obliged to acknowledge, unless they make God a
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mere Chimæra; and the Consequence is too just to be denied by Persons appealing to Reason.

NEITHER, *first*, is this Worship and Obedience due to God, in that impious and extravagant Notion of Mr. *Hobbs*, i. e. because of his *irresistible Power* to force us to it; as is evident by the bare Application of the foregoing Argument: Not to say any Thing of such an unnatural Way of thinking. For if Worship be due to God from the Exigency of his Nature and Divine Perfections, particularly when we consider him, not only infinitely good and amiable in himself, but infinitely good to us in our Creation, Preservation, perpetual Blessings, &c. it is not from Force and irresistible Power: Unless we call his adorable Perfections and Benefits irresistible, as they ought to be in demanding a grateful Return for them: But to worship him merely because of his irresistible Power, is making a Tyrant of the Supreme Being; so that if any Thing in Nature can be true, that impious and extravagant System must be false. We might ask the Patrons of irresistible Power, Whether infinite Bounty heaping on us innumerable Benefits, with the other unspeakable Perfections of God, does not as much exact our Duty and
Worship,

Worship, as irresistible Power? Or can we conceive his infinite Wisdom and Justice so to direct his Power in the Production of his Creatures, as that they should be ready to fly in his Face, and pull him out of his Throne, if they had but Power to do it? If this cannot be supposed without stretching Reason beyond all Bounds, why then, we must grant, that it is not Power alone in God, nor the Want of Power in his Creatures, that is, the Foundation of Right in God, or Duty in us. I do not say, but that his omnipotent Power, as well as his other Divine Attributes, concur in the Foundation of this Right and Worship, not as irresistible, but as drawing us out of nothing, and creating us according to his own Image, for which we can never pay him sufficient Acknowledgment. It is true, the Force of his Almighty Arm ought to be a particular Inducement to render him his due Worship voluntarily, which we are sure he can force us to, or punish us for our Neglect; but it is not due to him merely on that Score. This System of irresistible Power, *i. e.* that a Man may do *lawfully*, what he has Power to do, destroys all Security between Man and Man.

NEITHER, *2dly*, is this Worship due to God, a mere speculative Admiration of
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his Grandeur, and the like, which seems to be all the Devotion of the Deists, if they have any at all; but a real, practical Obligation indispensably due to him, and this by the very Light of Nature, unless we shut out its brightest Rays. It is undeniable, therefore, that God can no more deprive himself of his Eternal Right and Prerogative over his Creatures, than he can deprive himself of his Power of creating them; and as God, without this Power, would be a Chimæra, so would any Notion of him be chimerical, without such a Right and Prerogative, *i. e.* excluding such a Right from his Godhead.

NOR, 3^{dly}, ought any one, who understands Reasoning, to mind what the Author of the Grounds of the Christian Religion advances, when he says, That we must not imagine the Attributes of God to be like our inadequate Ideas; so that the Notions (says he) we have of Truth, Justice, Equity, &c. are all imperfect and inadequate, when we compare them with the same Attributes in God; by which it is to be feared, he would insinuate, that we need not trouble ourselves about the Wisdom, Justice, Equity, Power or Prerogative of God, since we cannot have any adequate Ideas of them. But, if that free Thought can

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have any just Meaning, it only proves, that God is infinitely more just, more wise, more good, more equitable to all his Creatures, than we can comprehend him to be; which, I hope, can be no Prejudice to the Cause of Religion, but, on the contrary, ought to make us more careful in rendering him his due Worship; since he must be just in himself, and to himself, even infinitely beyond the most perfect Ideas we can have of the strictest Justice.

THIS naturally brings us to the second Part of the Argument proposed at the Beginning of this Section, *viz.* The Consideration of Man, both capable of such an Obligation, and liable to it by all the Ties a Creature can have, with respect to the all-powerful Creator; which, though it be necessarily connected with the foregoing Part of the Proof for this indispensable Duty, and reciprocally inferred from it, yet contains several convincing Circumstances, enforcing the Truth in Question. For, *first*, it is manifest, as God has an essential Right over his Creatures, so they must, on their Side, be essentially subject and subordinate to him, I mean, as to the Obligation of it, the one naturally inferring the other; though some Persons may so far pervert the Order of Nature, as not to render

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him this due Worship. *2dly*, They received all they have from God, at least, as to the first Creation; which is sufficient in this Place, since the Deists, without the Imputation of Atheism, cannot suppose any other possible Cause of the Production of the World, with all the Creatures contained in it, beside God. And by Consequence, *3dly*, they are entirely dependent on him for their Origin, Being, and Existence, although there should be no further Necessity of his joint Concurrence with second Causes; which, nevertheless, would be a very bold Assertion; or, if they should deny, that they stand in Need of his perpetual Preservation; for put the Case he should only withdraw his all-powerful Hand, or barely suspend the general Course of Nature (his actual Concurrence to every particular Effect not so much belonging to this Place) I say, should God withhold the common Course of Nature, what would become of those, who seem to set so light by him? Why, they would drop again into their antient Nothing, and vanish like Smoke before his Sight. *4thly*, If all Creatures thus depend on him, receiving all they have, or can have, from his Hand, certainly, in that View alone they stand under very great

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Obligations. Could they, indeed, be independent of him, could they give themselves their own Being, could they preserve themselves in that State, could they continue the Course of Nature, even with the present Concurrence of second Causes; then they might say, with less Insolence, that they have nothing to fear, but his irresistible Power. But, if they can do nothing of all this, is it not natural, is it not highly rational, to adore the Hand that gives them all they have, to be perpetually supplicating for the Continuance of his Blessings, to express the utmost Gratitude for such inestimable Benefits, and to testify, on all Occasions, the most profound Veneration for the Almighty Lord and Father of all? If the Enemies of Religion had but the Appearance of such Arguments against it, as there are for it, what Triumphs should we have!

HENCE it appears, what wild and extravagant Notions Persons must have, who should pretend to persuade themselves, or others, that Man was created without any Obligation, or, that there was no such Thing in Nature; when we see the very Notion of the Supreme Creator, infinite in all Perfections, and infinitely good to us, with the absolute Dependence all his Creatures

tures have of him, as well as the infinite Benefits they receive from him, imply an undoubted Right in God, to demand such a Worship, and an indispensable Duty in the Creature to pay it him. To advance such wild Notions, is as much against the general Conceptions of all Mankind hitherto, as to advance, that there may be a Mountain without a Valley, or an Effect without a Cause. If one should ask them what Reasons they can give, why Man should be created without any Obligation, contrary to the most just and natural Ideas we can have of the Supreme Being, we see nothing but bold Assertions, without any Proof, and in a Point of such Consequence too; unless it be, that their lawless Passions make them wish there were no such Obligation; which, I fear, is the Case. There can be no Repugnance, why God should require such an Obligation; nor can there be any Incapacity in the Creature, to render him a Worship so just and natural: Will any Man, capable of Reason, pretend to advance, that we are not capable of Gratitude, Love, Honour, Worship, Veneration, Obedience, &c. Cannot we love our Friends, as well as injure them? Cannot we honour and obey God, as well as curse and blaspheme him? Cannot we

acknowledge Benefits, as well as receive them? with several other Considerations, that shew the Unreasonableness of Libertins, when they attack the Obligation of worshipping God. Are not such Notions not only derogatory to his Supreme Dignity, but even directly contrary to his infinite Wisdom and Justice, by supposing him to have made his Creatures independent, as to any Obligation; nay, ready to fly in his Face, had they Power to do it? Is it not likewise to deprive him, as far as in them lies, of his undoubted Right over his Creatures? Does not this attack his very Godhead? For though he stands in Need of nothing, he cannot deny himself.

THE same Truth is evidently shewn from the natural Justness, Reasonableness, and Fitness of the Thing in itself. Whoever denies all Justness, Fitness, Proportion, Disproportion of Things, either with respect to one another, or the original Fountain from which they sprung, in Effect, takes away the Use of Reason and Argumentation, and must terminate in downright Scepticism. Whenever we reason and argue, it is about some Object or other; if that Object has no Fitness, or Unfitness, no Proportion, or Disproportion, either in itself, or with respect to other
Objects,

Objects, it is in vain to think of finding out any Truth concerning it; and so of all others: Which would render the Use of Reason precarious, and terminate in Scepticism, which is a Blot on Reason itself: By Consequence there are Properties, Fitnesses, Relations, and Proportions in all Things, both in themselves, and with respect to one another. Not that there is any Thing in Creatures independent of God, since not only their Existence, but also their Essence, Properties, Fitnesses, are from the Supreme Reason in God: But, wherever right Reason evidently discovers such just Properties and Fitnesses of Things, with respect to one and other; as well as to our Judgments of them, we are sure of the Truth of what we advance, or, may reduce the Person, who shall call it in Question, to downright Scepticism. Now, nothing in Nature can be imagined more just and fit in itself, than that there should be such a Worship and Obedience due to God from Man, with an entire Submission and Subordination of the Creature to the Creator; to deny this, would be to subvert the whole Order of Nature: Nor is it in the Power of the Deists, to shew any Thing more just and fit, than such a Subordination, which, in free Agents, as Men are, chiefly consists in their Duty and Obedi-

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ence to the Supreme Being, Author, and universal Cause of all Things: Therefore the very Order of Nature declares to us, that there is a Worship due to God from Man.

THIS Consideration will obviate an impious, and even groundless Assertion of some of our free Actors, who pretend, that admitting it were just and natural, we should render all due Worship to God, yet God does not exact this Duty of us, but leaves us to do as we please: For, *first*, what a preposterous and contradictory Way of Reasoning is this? We own it is most just and natural, according to the most evident Dictates of right Reason, to adore, worship, and obey God; but we may let it alone if we please, that is, we must act most unjustly, unnaturally, and contrary to the best Dictates of right Reason, if we do; nothing can be more contrary to Reason, than such an Evasion. But, *2dly*, as the three foregoing Reasons infer one another, they shew also, that it must be the *positive Will* of the Supreme Being, to oblige Men to the Performance of this great Duty.

BECAUSE this Worship being essentially due to him, from the very Nature of his Divine Perfections, on the one Side; the
Con-

Consideration of the Creatures entire Dependence, on the other; and the Justness and Reasonableness of it in itself; it is evident, God Almighty cannot will to deprive himself of his natural and inherent Right; he cannot will contrary to the unerring Dictates of his infinite Wisdom and Justice; he cannot will contrary to the Order of Nature, contrary to the essential Exigences and Reasons of Things; and consequently, by his positive Will he obliges Man to render him his due Honour, Worship, Obedience, &c. Nor will the very Free-thinkers have the Insolence to deny, that we ought to obey the positive Will of God, when it is notified to us; by Consequence, all those must run the Risque of standing guilty of Rebellion against the positive Will of God, who refuse to render him his due Worship.

LASTLY, The unnatural Absurdities evidently following from any contrary System, absolutely confirm the foregoing Truth, and mark out to us, in the most sensible Manner, that there is an obligatory Worship due to God from Man. These Absurdities may easily be gathered from what has been said already; but it will not be improper to Rake them up into one Bundle, that we may have a more thorough

rough View of the Materials that compose this pretended System of no Religion. Let us put any contrary System in a proper Contrast, with the just Notions all Persons must have of God, who acknowledge his Existence. For Example; Suppose I should say, in the Language of our modern Infidels, " I own, it is God has given me
 " all I have; What then? I owe him no-
 " thing for it, unless he can force me to
 " it. I acknowledge he has made me the
 " most noble Creature of this lower Cre-
 " ation, endowed me with the glorious
 " Light of Reason, furnished me with all
 " my Faculties, and shewed forth the
 " Treasures of his Wisdom, Power, and
 " Goodness towards me; suppose so; I am
 " not obliged to thank him for it; nei-
 " ther would I have the least Regard for
 " him, if he were not too strong for me.
 " On the other hand, I know he is the
 " Supreme Being, the first Cause, Mover,
 " Governor, and Preserver of the Uni-
 " verse; infinite in all Perfections, most
 " admirable in all his Works, most wise
 " in his Counsels, most unerring in his
 " Judgments, most equitable in Justice,
 " most adorable in Majesty, most amia-
 " ble for his Goodness and Bounty in re-
 " gard of all: But what is that to me? I
 " owe

“ owe him no Worship, no Obedience,
 “ no Veneration, no Return of Gratitude
 “ and Love for it.” If this can be a natural Way of Reasoning, what can be unreasonable? May not we as well make a Jest of Reason, as well as of Religion; and confound all the Natures and Notions of every Thing in Life, as advance such unnatural Absurdities? Yet this, in Effect, is the *English* of those, who pretend to say, that we have no internal Obligation upon us with respect to the Duties of Life. If, therefore, the very Light of Reason marks out to us some Duties and Obligations with respect to God, the same Reason will hold with all other Duties that have an evident Connexion with them: There is, by Consequence, an absolute Obligation incumbent on Man, of serving God, and rendering him his due Worship, from the very Notion of God, the Creatures, and the Nature of the Thing in itself.

ANOTHER Absurdity following from any contrary System, is, that if there is nothing due to God from the Nature of the Thing in itself, it is evident, that, suppose Man were capable of resisting God, or even attacking Heaven with the antient Giants, to place themselves in his Throne, there would be nothing in it, but what is
 just

just and lawful; or, in Effect, it follows, that in the Nature of the Thing there would be no more Worship (*verbo absit Blasphemia*) due to God, than to the Devil. As this Sequel is undeniable in the System of our modern Infidels, one might ask them, what Difference there is between downright Atheism, and to have such Notions of the great God of Heaven and Earth? A false God is no God at all.

3dly, It follows, that if all Right were founded in Power, and not in the Nature and Justness of the Thing in itself, God Almighty, setting aside his irresistible Power, could not, in Justice, exact any Duty and Worship from Man, but as Tyrants, who oppress their Subjects by their unlimited Power; and if he should do it, he would be guilty (in that Supposition) of as great an Injustice, by invading Man's natural Prerogative, as he, who, by open Violence, should force his free-born Neighbour to become his Bond-slave.

4thly, It follows from the same System, of Right being founded in Power only, without any Obligation in Nature, that any Man in the World might with a safe Conscience at least, though, perhaps, not with a safe Neck, cut the Throats of all that opposed him, and stick at nothing that

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that stood in his Way, if he had but Power to do it; neither would all the Compacts, or Oaths to the contrary, any farther oblige, than the Want of Power to maintain the Breach of them, as is evident to the least Reflexion; for either such Compacts and Oaths oblige of their own Nature, agreeably to the just Dictates of Reason in God, or they do not; if they do oblige, of themselves, why then there is an Obligation founded in the Nature of the Thing, abstracting from Power; if they do not, all the foregoing Absurdities follow from such a System.

THUS, whoever would introduce this new System of no Religion, must also introduce new Laws of Reason and Argumentation; or rather, must prove, that Truth is Falshood, Right is Wrong, Good is Evil; and, indeed, break in upon the most just and essential Notions we can possibly have of God and Nature; for, unless we explode the most evident Principles, and make all the Lights Nature has given us hitherto, to be nothing else but Prejudice and Prepossession, we must acknowledge, that there is an obligatory Worship due from Man to God. Whether the Deists acknowledge this great Truth, is much a Case, as to the Intent of the Whole; it

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is only required, that this first great Point, which is the Basis and Foundation of the rest, be allowed by all to be certainly true, as undoubtedly it is; and whoever pretends to disprove it, may as well endeavour to prove there is no such Thing as Reason at all.

PERHAPS the Reader may think so evident a Truth did not require such formal Proofs, since, whoever examines it seriously, must see the Certainty of it. Though this is really so, yet the Importance of it, and the manifold Corollaries, and Consequences flowing directly from it, which the Deists do not seem to take any great Notice of in the Duties of Life; the strict Connexion it has with several other important Truths, as will be seen by and by, renders it very proper to set such a fundamental Point in its due Light, which, when rightly attended to, will dissipate those oblique Clouds our modern Infidels endeavour to throw over it: It will also, as was observed before, make the Way much plainer towards Christianity, that being only a more particular Promulgation of the Nature of the Worship due to God, established by his own immediate Authority.

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As there is no Truth so certain, or sacred, but what the Malice of wicked Persons may set in a false Light; or, more properly, endeavour to obscure by Objections and Difficulties; which taken solitarily, may appear something intricate, but when compared with the solid Reasons for the Truth in Question, will vanish away by the Force of its Rays: This will appear by the Objections some free Actors make even against this great Article. As, *first*, when they say, that God made Man free, to do what he pleases, and would infer from thence, that he has no Obligation upon him; this has been shewn already to be directly false, as to his being exempt from all Obligation; because the Supreme Dignity of God, and the intire Dependence of his Creatures, for their Being, Preservation, and all other Blessings, enforce the Necessity of such an Obligation. But there seems to be a Fallacy in the Word *free*; if they mean, that Man is born with free Will and Liberty of Choice, to do Good, or Evil, to worship God, or not worship him; it is certainly too true, by woful Experience; since it is Matter of Fact, that some Persons do not render God his due Worship, or even any Worship at all: On the other hand, the Deists themselves

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selves are free to serve God duly, if they would but comply with his Grace, and turn their Reason to consider the great Obligations they have to him. But if by *free*, they mean independent, and exempt from all Duty and Obligation, with respect to the Supreme Being, infinitely adorable and amiable to all his rational Creatures, such a Freedom is a Chimæra, as the Proofs for the Point in Question evidently shew. And, in short, to be free in that Sense, they must either be Gods themselves, or make God a mere, empty Sound. I do not think the Deists will pretend to say, that Man can be independent as to his natural Being; that would approach very near Atheism: Nor can he any more be independent as to his moral Being; since infinite Perfection demands a just Veneration, infinite Blessings a grateful Return; neither can God renounce his essential Right and Prerogative, without renouncing himself; nor the Creature receive its Being, and all other Benefits, without being indebted to the Author for it: If so, why then, such a moral Independence and Exemption is a downright Inconsistence. Thus, Free-thinkers, because they have free Will to think on what Subject they please, impiously, and foolishly imagine, that

that they are free to *think away* all Religion, both Theory and Practice.

SOME People pretend to draw an Objection against the Being of any Duty, from the Ignorance several Men and Nations may have of it. But, *first*, this Objection cannot be made by a Deist, or one that believes the Being of a God: Because the Atheists will say, that there are several Men and Nations, who may be ignorant of any God at all; Does it follow, that there is no God, because some People may pretend to be ignorant of it? Surely Ignorance of a Truth does not destroy it. How comes it to pass, that Men are ignorant of a great many important Truths in other Matters, as well as Religion? For one may very rationally presume, that there are a great many demonstrable Truths, that some Men will not believe; there are other Truths, though really certain in themselves, yet they do not strike the Apprehension, till after a great deal of Application. That twice 2, for Example, make 4, is evident to all; but that 9 Times 9 make 81; or 900 Times 9 make 8100, all the World does not see so immediately; though it is as certain as the other. There are a great many Things that contribute to obscure a Truth, which, on a just Examination,

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would

would appear absolutely certain. It is not to be questioned, but that Passions, Prejudices, and Prepossession in any Kind, with a slothful Indolence, and Want of taking Pains to search to the Bottom of Matters, or Want of sufficient Talents, either natural or acquired, may hinder a great many Truths from being seen, which would appear evident on a just and serious Reflection. It is sufficient, in this Place, that all Persons of Judgment, Prejudices being removed, must grant, that there is such an Obligation due to God, and that none can be ignorant of it, unless they are biassed by some Weight, that turns the Balance against Truth. And what can be a greater Sign of Prejudice, than to see Libertins make an Argument of the Ignorance of Religion in some People, against the positive Testimonies of the wisest, best, and most learned Men of all Ages, whose Authorities for Religion might be produced, if it were necessary; and to a rational Man's Thinking, might very well counterbalance the Number of Ignorants?

THERE are others again, who, by an odd Way of thinking, make the very Wickedness of Man an Argument against Religion; and imagine, that God cannot oblige Men to worship him, because he
knew

knew from the Beginning, that Numbers of them would not comply with this Obligation: As if the Eternal Cause, and Father of all Things, must lose his Right over his Children, because they will not obey him. Besides, if this Objection had any Force, it puts a Weapon into the Hands of the Atheists, against the Being of any God at all; and, by Consequence, must be solved by the Deists themselves. For the Atheists will tell ye, they are not obliged to acknowledge the Existence of God, and actually deny it. Is there no Obligation therefore of acknowledging a God, because some Men will not comply with it? However, this Objection can have no Weight with any one, who considers, that if Laws and Obligations had no Force to bind, but from the Subjects Compliance, what would become of the World? It is but refusing to obey, and, according to the Tendency of this Objection, the Obligation ceases: What Lengths some People go out of the Way! But on the Whole, one may ask all Persons, who pretend to acknowledge a God, How can he be infinite in Majesty and Perfection, infinitely just, wise, prudent, provident, &c. as well as good, unless he requires what is indispensably due to him? Or rather, How

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can we have any just Notion of him, as God, the universal Cause, Father and Author of all that is good, unless it be due to him? It is true, he made Man essentially free, and therefore leaves him to his Liberty; but then he has given him sufficient Light to see what is his Duty, with free Choice to do what he thinks fit, as well as proper Helps, Motives, and Encouragements suitable to free Agents; so it is his own Fault, if, by the Neglect of his Duty, he renders himself obnoxious to the Severity of God's Justice, as essential to him as his Goodness.

BUT, as some well-meaning Christians may require a fuller Eclaircissement of this Difficulty, they ought to consider, that the Notion of God, and the Notion of Man, his Creature, imply an Obligation on the latter's Side to the former; this the foregoing Proofs shew to a Demonstration. Man is essentially free, as Faith, Reason, and every Man's Experience convince him of; capable of Duty, Love, Gratitude, Veneration towards his Creator and Benefactor, and ought to perform this Duty to the best of his Power: God is infinitely just, and must require it of him, since he cannot deny himself, he cannot act contrary to the eternal Reasons and Natures of Things.

Man,

Man, therefore, who might have complied with his Duty, is only responsible for all the dismal Consequences attending the Neglect of it. On the other hand, God is infinitely good and merciful, and both can, and will pardon all his Faults, provided he will but comply with the most merciful Conditions proposed to him. In order to this, God forewarns him, enables him, helps him, presses him to it, and even is ready to reward him for doing his Duty: But, if he unreasonably and obstinately will run on to his own Ruin, by abusing infinite Goodness, whom can he blame but himself, if he is overtaken at last by infinite Justice? Thus, by the Abuse of Free-will, Man is the first Cause of his own Misfortunes; yet, surely, our modern Infidels cannot be so far lost to Reason and their own Dignity, as to think it better to want Liberty, than be subject to so many Misfortunes, by the Abuse of it; they may as well say, it is better to be made a Log of Wood, than a rational Creature. Free-will is the peculiar Prerogative of Man, ^a by which he not only excels all animate and inanimate Beings, as far as an Heir to endless Kingdoms does a Bond-slave; but by a good Use of it, co-

F 3 operating

^a The Author speaks of this mortal State.

operating with the Favours of his eternal Master, may be made Partaker of endless Joys, if he would but comply with his Duty for a short Time, and not be so foolish, as to chuse endless Misery in Lieu of everlasting Bliss. But, perhaps, more of this, when we come to the Origin of Evil.

IT is a common Thing to hear our modern Libertins and Free-thinkers advance, with a careless Assurance, That it is beneath the Grandeur of God to trouble himself with what such insignificant Creatures as we, can do, since he can receive no Advantage by our Worship, or Detriment by our Faults.

IT is surprizing to imagine, such a Shadow of an Argument should make our modern Infidels so easy, in a Concern of so high a Nature, as our Duty to the great God of Heaven and Earth; for if he should concern himself about his own Honour, what would become of Free-thinkers? One may ask them, how he came to trouble himself (to use their Expression) to create us, and all the rest of the World, as insignificant as we are, to draw us from Nothing, and make us rational Creatures, being all-sufficient of himself, and receiving no Advantage at our Hands? If, then, this gracious Lord of Heaven and Earth
thought

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thought it worth his while (unless he made us by Chance) to make us a Portion of his Creatures, imprinting his holy Image upon us, and shewing forth the Glory of his Power in our Regard, and that too with such wonderful Wisdom, as all the Wit of Man can never comprehend, much less imitate: Surely the best and the most noble Part of us, that is, our moral and free Actions, are also worth his Care to see that we make right Use of the Faculties and Talents bestowed upon us; and as he is the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, as he is the Supreme Lord of Life and Death, as he is the all-wise and upright Judge of Right and Wrong, so it belongs to him, as far as is consistent with free Agents, to keep all his Creatures in their respective Duties, punishing the Guilty, either here, or hereafter, and rewarding the Dutiful by the Treasures of his Bounty. As, therefore, the free or moral Actions of rational Creatures have the chiefest Share in the Course of this lower Creation, infinitely beyond the Laws of Matter and Motion, Gravitation, and the like; and as none but an Atheist can deny all these to be regulated by the all-wise Rules of the Supreme Governor, so none but Persons entirely blinded by Passions, or Prejudice, can

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deny,

deny, that there must be Rules for the moral Actions of Men; which Rules being broke in upon, must leave a Deformity in those Actions, as irregular, as a monstrous Birth can be to the common Course of Nature. Thus it is only changing Hands, and the Deists Argument turns upon themselves, and obliges them, either to solve what they object, or confess what they would disprove; since he that takes Care of the least Atom, will not neglect Matters of much greater Consequence, *i. e.* the moral and free Actions of Men.

IT is scarce credible, that any serious Deists will advance, though it is what some have done, *viz.* That God, at the Beginning, only made Man for his Recreation, leaving him, afterwards, to run at random, and follow his own Inventions, without troubling himself with what he does, &c. If they should start such an impious Notion, one might say, in short, that this were sporting in earnest with the most serious Things, and making the most wise God guilty of the greatest Extravagances: Since more dismal Consequences would follow from the Passions and Inclinations of Men being left without any moral Rule, than from the fortuitous Jumble of *Epicurus's* Atoms. Such a Thought, therefore,

therefore, is not only unworthy of God, but of common Sense and Reason, and scarce deserves so much, as has been said already; so I shall follow it no further. Only we ought to observe, that such an extravagant Supposition directly attacks Providence, and, by Consequence, the Godhead itself, in one of his most essential Attributes, as will be seen in due Time and Place. But here I would seriously advise our modern Infidels not to deceive themselves, and others, with these and such like groundless Arguments; and take the Liberty to tell them, that they are worse than Madmen, if they lay the Stress of eternal Consequences on such a rotten Foundation.

WELL then, since it must be confessed by all, who pretend to Reason and Argumentation, that there is an indispensable Obligation incumbent on Men, of rendering due Worship and Obedience to God, and this by the very Light of Nature, if duly attended to; the Deists must give me Leave to draw some other Consequences and Corollaries from the fore-established Truth, which will come nigher the intended Purpose of this Controversy.

SECTION VI.

Corollaries and Consequences of the foregoing Doctrine.

THE first Corollary directly following from the foregoing Doctrine is, That there must be *some Religion*. This is evident from the Obligation of worshipping and serving God, demonstrated in the last Section. Because Religion is nothing else but that Virtue, by which due Worship is rendered to God; so that if there is a God, this God is to be worshipped; if he is to be worshipped, there must be a Virtue directing this Duty. The Acts, therefore, by which this due Worship is paid to God, is the Exercise of Religion; of this there can be no great Difficulty with Persons, who have the least Notion of an Argument, the Premises being proved already. But from hence it also follows,

1st, THAT though this Worship, or this natural Religion, requires to be performed in Spirit and Verity, as the Life and Soul, that is to animate and actuate it; nevertheless,

theless, it ought to extend itself to the Exterior, as well as the Interior, and shine forth in all our Actions: Because the same Duty to God, which demands the one, demands the other. External Actions, undoubtedly, are as liable to Obligation, and as capable of being rectified by Duty, as internal ones; and if external Actions may tend to the Dishonour of God (as the setting up an Idol, instead of God, certainly would do) they ought to be used, as a publick Testimony of our Duty towards him. Hence, nothing can be more conformable to right Reason, than that there should be an universal and publick Worship paid to God, by all Men. This Thought is so natural, that we find there never was a Nation, from the Beginning of the World to this Day, unless such Savages, if such there be, who by their Parents Faults, or Misfortunes, have so far degenerated from the Dignity of their Nature, as, like the *Hotentots*, to be scarce a Degree above Brutes, but who had a Notion of some Religion, true or false: Hence our Religion must shew itself by its Works; nor can it be looked upon, as an *indifferent Thing*, by any one capable of Reflexion above a common Savage. By Consequence, to say, as some Deists do, in

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a pompous Manner, but it is to be feared only from the Lips outwards: " I honour
 " and revere the great God of Heaven
 " and Earth, with all the Powers of my
 " Soul; I am astonished at the Thoughts
 " of his incomprehensible Essence; I am
 " lost in the Contemplation of his Divine
 " Perfections; I am in Raptures, when I
 " consider the inexpressible Charms of his
 " Beauty, &c." I say, this alone, though
 justly due to him, will not suffice; no, if
 there is a Worship due to him, we must
 conform our Works to it, as well as
 Words; and the principal Actions of our
 Lives ought to speak this Worship. This
 goes a great Way, and points out to us al-
 ready, that there is a Morality to be ob-
 served in our Actions, as far as regards
 God; which will be declared more at large
 when we come to the second Part. It
 follows,

2dly, THAT this Religion ought to be
 intirely conformable to the most just Will
 of God; the best Rule of all our Actions,
 agreeably to his infinite Wisdom and Sanc-
 tity, by whatsoever Way his holy Will
 may be notified to us, whether by natural
 Reason, or by his own positive declaring;
 and, if they can bear the Expression, *Re-
 vealing* to us the particular Parts of it,
 which,

which, without any Danger of Priestcraft, must be the *securest* Way of knowing after what Manner, and in what Things, he has a Mind to be worshipped by his Creatures, because, though Man may deceive us, God cannot. It follows,

3^{dly}, THAT the Deists, as well as others, are obliged, as they tender the Displeasure of the great God of Heaven and Earth, to search, and examine with all Care and Sincerity, not only in what this Religion chiefly consists, but also, whether God has not *de facto* revealed to us the particular Points of his Worship so essentially due to him; whether there are not some Things to be believed concerning God, which natural Reason alone cannot teach us; lest, perhaps, we may be misled in Matters so much above our Comprehension; and when discovered, to be embraced, against all the Oppositions of Flesh and Blood, against all Doubts and Difficulties, human Wit and Wickedness may invent, to invalidate or obscure them, provided they be sufficiently revealed. It follows,

4^{thly}, THAT this Religion, whether natural or revealed, can be but one, as to the Substance and essential Parts of it; agreeably to the Unity of his Godhead, the unerring Dictates of his Wisdom, and the all-

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all-equitable Rules of his Justice, requiring, or condemning, what is, or is not properly due to him. Hence our modern Latitudinarians must be extremely in the Wrong, when they would have us believe, that either all Religions are *Jure divino*, or, that God no more requires, that all Men should be of one Religion, than that they should be of one Sentiment; or, in fine, that an honest Sincerity in any Religion will secure us. Whoever sits down contented with such Notions, must have no just Idea, either of God, or of any Religion; for, beside accessory *Forms* and Discipline, most Religions contradict each other in several Points, some saying one Thing is essential, others not; yet one Part of the Contradiction must be true, and the other false; therefore both of them cannot be from God: Nor can any Man in his Senses imagine, that a confused Blend of Contradictions could ever be the Work of Divine Revelation: By Consequence, all such Latitudinarian Notions must be vain, and illusory, and proceed from a Mind, that either would deceive, or is deceived itself; Then, how can an honest Sincerity suffice, or even be at all in the promiscuous Profession of any Religion, since such Persons know, that the Divine Author, whom

whom all Christians acknowledge for their Head, assures us, that there is no Salvation without Faith in him, &c. Persons, therefore, of such extensive and pretended charitable Principles are condemned by their own Lawgiver, if they yet continue Christians; if they throw off the Mask with the Deists, they render themselves obnoxious to all the unnatural Absurdities of such an impious and contradictory System.

A SECOND Corollary following from the foregoing Doctrine is, That there must be some moral Good and Evil in Nature. This Consequence, without diving any further, as yet, into the Origin of Evil, seems to be as evident as this, *If there is a Mountain, there is a Valley*; because, if there is an indispensable Worship due to God, it is evident, that to comply with this Obligation, is good, to deviate from it, is evil; since moral Good and Evil is complying with, or deviating from, the Obligations incumbent on us. Now it is evident, from what has been said, that there is an indispensable Obligation incumbent on Men, of worshipping, and obeying God; and it is Matter of Fact, that all Men do not comply with this Duty, but on the contrary, some Men refuse to pay him his due

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due Worship, others curse and blaspheme his Sacred Name; by Consequence, some moral Evil is not only possible, but *de facto*; some Men stand guilty of very great Evils in the Sight of God, I may say, of the greatest Evils, since they deviate from the greatest of Obligations. Hence it follows,

1st, THAT to deviate from any other moral Obligation, must also be Evil; and by Consequence, all Men are obliged to consider what Duties are incumbent on their respective States, and to endeavour to comply with them, as they tender the dreadful Consequence of standing guilty of Evil in the Sight of God. It follows,

2^{dly}, THAT whatever God commands, or forbids Men to do (supposing it were proved, that he has *de facto* commanded or forbid any Thing, which will be seen in its proper Place) I say, in this Supposition, there is an absolute Obligation of obeying God, whensoever, or after what Manner soever, these Obligations are sufficiently notified to them; and by Consequence, the Neglect of them must be Evil. Hence also, as the most perfect Worship we can pay to God, is loving him, and obeying his Commands; so his sacred Will is the most perfect and just Rule of
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all our Actions, as proceeding from the most wise, just, and impartial Governor of the Universe, from whose Knowledge nothing can be hid, whose Wisdom nothing can deceive, and whose Justice nothing can pervert. It follows,

3^{dly}, As to some Particulars; that as God, though he can receive no real Damage, yet may be denied his due Honour, so all Thoughts, Words, and Actions tending to the Dishonour of God, must be evil of their own Nature; as in like Manner, all Thoughts, Words, and Actions, by which we render God his due Worship, are good in themselves, though no Advantage accrues to God by them. Hence, Idolatry, Blasphemy, impious Imprecations, execrable Oaths, and Perjuries, Calling on his Name to testify wicked Things, all Dissembling and Hypocrisy in his Regard, all forcing, deluding, and drawing in others to do the like, must evidently be great Evils in his Sight; and by Consequence, it is a groundless, as well as impious Plea of some Deists, who say, " That
 " as it is not in our Power to injure God,
 " so all our Actions, good or bad, are no-
 " thing in his Sight; and therefore no-
 " thing can be accounted Evil before
 " him:" I say, this is entirely frivolous, and

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not

not worthy to be alledged by Persons, who pretend to Reason and Demonstration; for certainly, the *Tendency* of an Action may be bad, although no Hurt is done by it; neither does the frustrating a malicious Effect justify the Malice of the Cause, any more, than failing to shoot a Man through the Head, because I mist him, or the Bullet dropt out unawares, or the Man had an impenetrable Helmet on, any Way justify my real Design to murder him; nay, our Malice would be greater, with respect to God, both on Account of his Sovereign Dignity, and the Returns of Gratitude and Veneration we ought to pay him.

NEITHER can the Deists excuse themselves by pretending, that God will not impute our evil Actions to us; and therefore we need not be in any Concern about them; *first*, because such a groundless Evasion gives up the Cause, as to the Existence of Evil; for when they contend for the Non-Imputation of it, they own there is such a Thing. *2dly*, Because God can no more renounce his Justice, than he can his Mercy, which at the same Time the Deists are as much obliged to reconcile together, as the Christians; unless they deprive him of one of them. If, therefore, any of our Actions

can be evil in the Sight of God, as the Denial of his Being, or his due Honour and Worship, certainly would be, we shall most assuredly be accountable to God for them.

THE Deists, therefore, have both talked and acted against Reason, when they endeavoured to persuade themselves, and others, that there was no such Thing as moral Evil, or, that it was nothing but a Bugbear to keep People in Awe; they ought to change their Tone, and declare ingenuously, " That hitherto, it is true, " they have endeavoured to make People " believe, that though there may be a " God, yet he exacts nothing from us; " neither can he oblige us to any Duty, " without breaking in upon our Liberty: " That all our Actions are indifferent in his " Sight; and consequently, to seek Good, " or Evil in them, is to impose upon right " Reason: But all our Meaning in this is, " that God will not impute any Evil to " us. We confess, that as the very Light " of Nature obliges us to own a God, " and that this God is to be worshipped " by Men, it is evidently good to render " him this Worship, and must be evil to " refuse it him; but then we hope he will " be so forgetful of his Honour, and so

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" unjust

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“ unjust to himself, as to renounce his
 “ eternal Prerogative over his Creatures :
 “ We presume he will be so indolent (for
 “ that is really the *English* of it) as to shut
 “ his Eyes and Ears, if the Expression
 “ may be allowed, to the blasphemous
 “ Impieties of Men, and follow, not the
 “ Dictates of his infinite Wisdom, but the
 “ vain Notions of our weak Brain, making
 “ our Passions Judges of what is fit to be
 “ done, instead of his own Justice. We
 “ confide he will be so remiss, as to let us
 “ attack Heaven, and endeavour to pull
 “ him out of his Throne, without think-
 “ ing it worth his while to take Notice
 “ of us ; or, in fine, will be so very good-
 “ natured, as not to impute any Evil to
 “ us, for the most horrid Attempts and In-
 “ sults we may be guilty of against him.”

IF such a Way of thinking be ridicu-
 lous, as well as wicked, it is equally so,
 either to deny the Existence of Evil, or
 the Imputation of it, if we are really
 guilty.

IT is evident, therefore, that the Deists
 must grant the Existence of some moral
 Good and Evil, from this Head alone,
That there is a God; or they must deny,
 that there is any Faculty in us to distin-
 guish which is which, or even to know

what is Good, and what is Evil; which is to deny one essential Half of an intelligent Being, if the Metaphor may be allowed: They may as well divest themselves of the other too; I mean, the Knowledge of Truth and Falshood, since the same Way of arguing will prove, that there is no distinguishing between either, and so the Man drops of course.

THUS, whoever would avoid the Imputation of Atheism, must necessarily acknowledge a great many Truths, which some Persons do not take so much Notice of in their Practice. One might add, as another Corollary to what has been said, That there must be an Obligation incumbent on Men, of living up to the Rules of Morality; but that being a Point of very great Consequence, with respect to Man and Man, together with some Objections against the Existence of Evil, shall be treated more at large in the Second Part.



THE
Great DUTIES
OF
LIFE, &c.

PART II.

SECTION I.

The second principal Point considered, viz. Whether Men are not obliged to observe the Laws of Morality.

§. I.

THE Artifice of some Persons, in endeavouring to make the World believe there is no such Thing, as moral Good or Evil, or that any of our Actions are morally better, or worse,

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worse, than others, evidently argues, that they had no other Way to elude the practical Part of Morality, but by puzzling the Theory, and throwing a Mist over first Principles; hoping, by that Means, to veil their corrupt Practices with some faint Appearance of Reason: Yet, when we consider how rational the chief Duties of Morality are, one would wonder how such Persons can pretend to Reason, and establish Principles so diametrically opposite to it.

THE universal Obligation of Morality, as to this Controversy, may be considered under these two Heads. *First*, In regard of God. *2dly*, With respect to our Neighbours, and ourselves. That there is an Obligation in regard of God, is evident, from what has been proved already. We need only apply the same Rule to the other, that is, our Neighbours, and ourselves; the same Light of Reason will shew us, that there may be criminal Excesses with respect to Man and Man, evidently against the Dictates of right Reason, as it is Matter of Fact, there are against God, in the Atheists, and such wicked Persons; and this, whether we consider the Supreme Reason in God, or that Share of it, which he has given to

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Men: Yet a great many of our modern Infidels, when you talk to them of Good and Evil, and the Laws of Morality, not only receive it with a Sneer, but actually reject all such Obligations in publick Discourses, calling all those Fools and Bigots, who trouble their Heads about it. It is certain, one Side or other are Fools in the worse Sense; the one for submitting their Necks to so weighty a Yoke, if it is nothing but Bigotry; the other, for preferring Evil to Good, in Case there should be any such Thing. The Folly of the latter must be evident, if it were but for this Reason, because by it they expose themselves to Dangers and Consequences of the last Importance, in the greatest Concern of human Life. However, that such Persons may have no other Plea, but their own Folly, that if they will be Libertins, in following their brutal Passions, they must at the same Time act irrationally; I shall endeavour to prove directly, that some Actions of Men may be morally good, and some morally evil, in the common Duties of Life, with respect to our Neighbours, and ourselves; so that there may be criminal Excesses, and heinous Evils, committed by Men, which not only must be contrary to the Supreme Reason in God, and dis-

disapproved by him, but also contrary to the Dictates of our own Reason duly applied; and by Consequence, the Laws of Morality, directing and regulating our Actions, are incumbent in general on all Men, who enjoy the right Use of it. In order to which, the following Observations will be of great Use. As,

I. THAT the Exercise of natural Reason chiefly consists in these two Points, *viz.* In the forming of our Judgments, and the Direction of our Lives; or, in other Words, in discovering to us, what is to be known, and what is to be done. The one chiefly regards speculative Truths, the other practical ones. As to the first, all Persons, who appeal to Reason, must acknowledge some Certainty in our Judgments, *i. e.* that there are some Things certainly *true*; for Example, that it is impossible for the same Thing to be, and not to be, at the same Time; that 1 and 1 make 2; that there is a God, and the like; otherwise they must fall into universal Scepticism, as was observed in the first Preliminary, and is a Blot on Reason itself. But must they not acknowledge some Certainty in our Judgments, as to the *Agenda* also, or what is to be done? *i. e.* That there are some Things, which
ought

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ought to be done, and some, that ought not to be done; as well as there are some Things, which ought to be assented to, and others not? Those, on the Consideration, that they are in themselves good, or evil; these, that they are really true, or false; so that whoever acknowledges one, seems obliged to acknowledge the other, unless we take away the Use of Reason, as to the better Half of it: I say, the better Half; for, undoubtedly, the Direction of our Lives is of much greater Consequence, than any bare speculative Truth whatsoever; and it would be highly derogatory to the Dignity of a rational Creature, as well as God Almighty's Goodness towards Man, to say, that having given us the Faculty of discerning Truth from Falshood, he has denied us that of knowing Good from Evil, which, I think, would be useless, if there were neither Good, nor Evil, in Nature; so that the Denial of it, already, seems as opposite to right Reason, as to Religion. However, all the Use of it, at present, is to infer, that there must be some certain Rules and Principles in Practice, as well as in speculative Truths, *i. e.* in the Direction of our Lives, in what we ought to do, and what not; as in the forming of our Judgments, as to what ought

ought to be believed and assented to, and what not.

2. WHEN the Question is put, Whether Men are obliged to the Laws of Morality in their Lives and Actions? By the Laws of Morality, as far as regards this Question, we mean those Rules and Boundaries, which right Reason dictates, ought to be observed in our Lives and Actions with respect to one another. If any one should quibble, and ask, What is right Reason, or what are the Dictates of right Reason? It may be answered, *first*, That such a Question might be tolerable in a professed Sceptick, who denies all Truth and Certainty whatsoever, and, by Consequence, destroys all Use of Reason, as far as in him lies: But such a Question must be quite foreign to this Dispute, in Persons, who make their Appeal to Reason. It is answered therefore, *2dly*, That right Reason, as to this Place, is that Faculty, or Power, by which we know Truth and Falshood on the one Part, and Good and Evil on the other. The Dictates of right Reason, as to Generals, are, That *Truth is to be assented to, Falshood to be denied*; and, That *Good is to be done, Evil to be avoided*: The Application of it, in particular, is, when the Faculty of knowing

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knowing Truth from Falshood, clearly perceives any Thing to be true, as, that *1 and 1 make 2*, it is to be assented to, and the contrary rejected; so when the Faculty of knowing Good and Evil clearly apprehends any Thing to be good, as the saving an innocent Man's Life, when it is in our Power; or the contrary to be evil, as the ripping up his Bowels to satisfy a brutal Revenge; the one is to be done, the other to be avoided; which last, one might call Cries of Conscience, only our modern Infidels are so extremely averse to that Word.

3. BY moral Good and Evil, with respect to the Actor, all the World hitherto has understood it to consist in complying with, or deviating from, that due Rectitude, Rules, and Bounds, which our Reason dictates to us, ought to be observed in our Lives and Actions, with respect to our Neighbours, and ourselves; which Rules and Bounds discover to us, whether the Action be evil or not, as they are taken from the Nature of the Thing; so that to deviate from them, is to deviate from Nature itself, as will be seen in the fifth Observation, and in the Proofs for the Point in Question. Can any Persons, pretending to Reason, advance, that there are no Rules and Bounds to be observed in
human

human Actions? Or, that Men never deviate from that due Rectitude they ought to observe, or, pass those Boundaries our Reason tells us ought not to be passed? If neither of these can be said, without breaking in upon the first Principles of Reason, it appears already, that there may be heinous Evils in the World; and, by Consequence, there must be a Morality observed in our Actions, to keep them in that due Rectitude they ought to have.

4. HUMAN Actions, with respect to one another, are as capable of Rectitude and Regulation, as those that immediately regard God; which last has been abundantly proved under that Article; so that there can be no Contradiction, or Absurdity, in Nature, in supposing Obligations and Duties between Man and Man, as there are on the Part of Man, with respect to the Supreme Being; but that there may be criminal Excesses between Man and Man, in the Transgression of such Obligations. On the contrary, such a Supposition, as it contains no Repugnancy whatsoever, so it should seem the most natural in itself, and the most consonant to right Reason, that there should be such Obligations; except in those, whose brutal Passions, and unnatural Habits, have almost obscured that noble

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noble Light. Neither, on the Whole, could any Thing be more desirable, than that there should be some certain Duties, some certain Bounds and Limits set to the exorbitant Sallies of corrupt Nature, in order to avoid those otherwise inevitable Disorders and Confusions, to which our Lives would be exposed, were there no such Duties.

5. It ought to be particularly observed, that when we speak of Truth and Falshood, Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, &c. we must distinguish between the Object, and the Faculty discovering the Object to us; for Example, though there may be Truth and Falshood in Nature, whether we discover it, or not, yet the only Rule and Criterion to discover it, in natural Duties, are the Dictates of right Reason, and those Principles it lays down to us, which, if we do not follow, we may be led into Error; and if we judge directly contrary to them, we judge falsely; nay, the very Denial of such Principles, will either be evidently false, or will destroy all Truth and Certainty in our Judgments, which, instead of being rational, leaves us in insuperable Darknes, that we should not know whether we had any Being, or not. Thus, a Rod that is three
Foot

Foot long would be a Yard, whether we measure it or not; and two other Rods of the same Length, would be Yards also, equal to one another; yet we should not actually know this, but by applying our Rules to it, by which we know also, that whatever Quantity is not three Foot long, is not a Yard. In like Manner there may be in Nature Good or Evil, Right or Wrong, whether we discover it or not; yet the only Rule to discover it, are those Principles, the Dictates of right Reason lay down to us; and to act against those Principles will be a certain Criterion to us, that we act wrong. By this it appears, that our modern Infidels, when they deny the Obligations of Morality, break in upon all the Rules of Reason and Science; so far are they from being rational in their Liberties.

§. II.

*The Resolution of the Question,
and the Proofs for it.*

THE foregoing Considerations being rightly considered, there will be no great

great Difficulty in proving the Affirmative of this second great Point in Question, *viz.* That there is a Morality to be observed in the Lives and Actions of Men, with respect to one another; and because the Adversaries of natural Religion make their Appeal to Reason, and require the strongest Proofs from that Head alone, the Proofs for this important Point, in which all Nature is concerned, shall be put in their genuine Light, by which it will appear, that the whole Voice of Nature is against them. As,

I. THERE must be an Obligation incumbent on all Men, of observing the Laws of Morality, with respect to their Neighbours, and themselves, if human Actions, in those Respects, may be good or evil, right or wrong, just or unjust; because one of the principal Ends and Uses of Reason is, to shew us, what is to be done, and what is to be avoided; by Consequence, if there can be any Evil in human Actions, the Rules of Morality, and those Boundaries the Light of Nature shew to us, are necessary to be observed, in order to avoid the horrid Deformity of it. I presume, no Man, pretending to follow the Dictates of right Reason, will call the major Proposition in Question; since, if
there

there can be Evil in our Actions, we ought to avoid it, which is one of the fundamental Rules of Morality: Nor will any Man in his right Senses pretend, that we ought to do Evil; but on the contrary, the greatest Libertins, for their last Plea, pretend there is no such Thing in Nature. Then, by a further Consequence, we are not only obliged to consult those Rules and Boundaries, which teach us to avoid Evil; but in Case there be any such Thing, those Rules and Boundaries are absolutely necessary to keep us in our respective Duties. This first Proposition, therefore, must be true, if any Thing in Nature can be so. It only remains to prove, that human Actions may be good or evil, right or wrong, &c. and the Obligation of Morality follows of course; but it is no less certain, that human Actions may be good or evil, right or wrong, with respect to our Neighbours, and ourselves: Therefore it is incumbent on all Men to live up to the Laws of Morality, in order to do Good, and decline from Evil.

WHAT is chiefly to be proved against modern Infidels and Libertins, is the minor or 2d Proposition, *viz.* That there may be criminal Excesses, and even heinous Evils in the Actions of Men; and not to

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dwell altogether on Generals, we will instance the greater Enormities first, as wilful Murders, tyrannical and inhuman Cruelties, barbarous Oppressions of the Innocent, with other Crimes tending to the Destruction of the Universe, or of one another; as indeed most heinous Sins do; such as Adulteries, beastly Whoredoms and Pollutions, destroying the noble Race of Man in the very Bud, &c. For if these, or any of them, be proved to be evil, the Point is gained; all others will appear greater or less Evils, as they contain more or less Deformity in them.

THE Question, therefore, is, Whether the most barbarous Actions that ever were, or can be committed by Men, are evil in themselves, or not: Suppose the Murder of a Parent, or the dearest Friend and greatest Benefactor in the World; the Action being attended with the most aggravating Circumstances, of Benefits and Ties of Gratitude on the one hand, and ushered in with the most barbarous Cruelty on the other. It is shocking to human Nature to think there should be such *Nero's* and *Caligula's* in the World, but much more to hear Persons maintain publicly, that there is no Evil in such Actions, and challenge us to prove a Proposition at
which

which Nature itself startles, and our Blood curdles in our Veins to think on; which our modern Infidels will tell us with a Sneer, is nothing but Prejudice of imbib'd Principles and Education: But to what horrid Prejudices must those be enslaved, whose exorbitant Passions make them thus deaf to the Voice of Blood and Nature? Is it Prejudice to follow those Lights and Principles, which, of all others, seem to be the most universally stamped and engraven on our Souls, and interwoven with our very Being? Or, Is it Prejudice to say, that Reason ought to be our Guide in the Conduct of our Lives? If so, then I own nothing can be proved to be evil, unless it be that miserable Condition of human Nature wrapt up in universal Darkneſs, without any Power to emerge out of it. But if we acknowledge the Uſe and Power of Reason in the clearest Ideas we can have, *quoad Agenda*; if there is given us a Light of Nature, by which we ought to direct our Lives, when it shines before us; if we are dealing with Persons, who make their Appeal to Reason, why then we must acknowledge, that the Murder of a Parent and Benefactor, in the Circumstances proposed, must be a most heinous Evil in the Actor of it; and by Conſequence, all the

other deliberate Actions of Men, as they deviate from that due Rectitude, which the Light of Nature dictates to us they ought to have, must be Evil also. And to shew to what a Height of Impiety, they must be brought; or rather, into what Depth of Blindness their Prejudices and Passions have plunged such Persons, who deny the Existence of moral Evil, those unnatural Actions may be proved to be Evil from the strongest Heads, that can concur to corroborate any practical Truth. As, *first*, because such horrid Actions have a natural Deformity in themselves, which all Men hitherto understood to be moral Evil. *2dly*, Because such Actions are directly contrary to the Dictates of right Reason, discovering their unnatural Deformity to us. *3dly*, Because such Actions must be directly contrary to the most just Reason of the Supreme Being. *4thly*, Because such Actions are evidently contrary to the Notion of an all-wise and provident Governor of the Universe. And *Lastly*, from the unnatural Disorders and Confusion attending such a horrid System.

THOUGH all these Reasons seem just and evident of themselves, to Persons of Judgment and Penetration, it will not be improper to put them in their full Light;
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Part II. of LIFE, &c. 101

considering the Importance of the Subject, with the Corollaries and Consequences following from them, so necessary for the Conduct of human Life. The first Reason shewing such horrid Actions mentioned just now to be evil, is, because of the unnatural Deformity they contain in themselves; this will appear by comparing such Actions with the universal Order of Nature, and other Actions opposite to them. For Instance,

THE Murder of a Parent, or an innocent Man, in the most barbarous Manner the Wickedness of Man is capable of, and the Saving an innocent Man's Life, when it is in our Power, are Actions, whose Objects, Ends, Nature, and Circumstances, are as different and opposite, as the North and South Point in the Compass, as a Circle and a Quadrangle, or even Truth and Falshood: I say, murdering an innocent Man, and saving his Life, are as opposite in their Objects, Ends, and Effects, as any of these; the one is what all the World hitherto has understood by Good, the other is what they understood to be Evil; by Consequence, it is either trifling with Words and Terms, or it is confounding the whole Order of Nature, as much as in them lies, who confound one with the

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other.

other. And to apply this to a real Deist, if there are any such, who are not Christians; those Actions are as opposite in themselves, as the Adoring the Supreme Being in them, and Cursing and Blaspheming his unlimited Power in a *Hobbist*; the one they must acknowledge to be Good, the Opposite to it must be Evil. Hence any System, that destroys the Existence of Good and Evil, is so far from having any Foundation in Nature, that it tends to destroy all the Order of Nature, as well as Reason. It is as impossible to conceive, that all Things should not have different Ends and Objects in Morals, as in the rest of Nature: The universal Creator has established eternal and essential Differences, essential Bounds, Order, Distinction, Proportion, and Disproportion in the different Causes and Effects of it; otherwise we must confound all our Ideas, and the Objects of them, without any Guide or Light (in this Hypothesis) to emerge out of such universal Darkness. As, therefore, Truth and Falshood, Proportion and Disproportion, are founded in Nature; so are Good and Evil: The one, when an Action is performed according to that due Rectitude it ought to have; the other, when it is not so performed: So that there must be essential Differences in the

the moral and free Actions of Men, undoubtedly the most noble Part of our Nature, as there are in mere Matter, Figure, and Extension; therefore murdering an innocent Man, and saving his Life, are entirely different and opposite in the Order of Nature, with respect to the Duties between Man and Man; therefore morally Good or Evil; therefore we break in upon the Order of Nature, when we break in upon the Laws of Morality.

2. THE same Truth is shewn evidently from the second Head proposed above, *viz.* Because such Actions are contrary to the Dictates of right Reason, or the very Light of Nature discovering the Object to us. We will instance the same Actions, considered with respect to the most just Ideas we can have in the Duties of Life between Man and Man; or, in other Words, with respect to our Actions, as they are moral.

EITHER killing an innocent Man in the Circumstances mentioned, a Friend, a Benefactor, a Parent, to whom we owe the greatest Obligations, and by Consequence, the Action must be attended with the blackest Ingratitude; either this Action, I say, is according to the just Dictates of right Reason, or it is not; for undoubtedly in Matters of such Consequence, where

one of the greatest Duties of Life is concerned, right Reason ought to intervene, or no where; neither can there be any Medium in the Case. If Murder, therefore, *be* according to the just Dictates of right Reason, as the Adversaries of Morality must hold, or give up the Cause; why then I ask them, Would the saving such a Person, defending his innocent Life, making all the Returns of Gratitude, and acknowledging our Obligations to the best of our Power, be also according to the Dictates of right Reason, or not? If not, they must say the best of our Actions are irrational, and the worst rational. Now, if saving an innocent Man's Life, in the Circumstances just mentioned, be also according to the Dictates of right Reason; why then, Actions the most opposite in all Circumstances, Point blank contrary to one another, with respect to the same Object, must be equally rational, equally just and proper to be done. This is rare Philosophy indeed! Whoever can advance this, can advance any Thing; they may as well say, that to be rational and irrational is the same Thing. This Argument shews, that Libertins must be as extravagant in their Way of reasoning, as they are in their Morals. Further,

WHOEVER

WHOEVER appeals to Reason, or pretends to act rationally, must acknowledge some certain Use and Exercise of it, in the Direction of our Lives and Practice: For what signifies all our Boasts of Reason, if we cannot reduce it to Practice? As what would the Power of knowing Truth avail us, if there were no such Thing as Truth to be found? Again, nothing could be true, and nothing false in our Respect, I mean in natural Things, if such Propositions as these, *It is impossible for the same Thing to be and not to be at the same Time; 1 and 1 make 2; a Circle is not a Quadrangle, &c.* In like Manner, what Use could Reason have in the Direction of our Lives, if these universal Principles in Morals, Good is to be done, Evil to be avoided, were not as certain as these, Truth is to be assented to, Falshood to be rejected? Neither would these Principles be of Use to us, if there were nothing Good, and nothing Evil; by Consequence, we must take away the chief Use of Reason in this uncertain State of our Lives, if we do not acknowledge some Good or Evil in the Actions of Men; if Good, the Opposite is Evil; if Evil, the Opposite Good. But as these, any more than Truth and Falshood, can never subsist in mere *Universals*, but
 something

something in particular must be Good, and something Evil; so nothing can claim a greater Share in that Deformity, than wilful Murder, and those unnatural Actions mentioned before; therefore they are horrid and monstrous Evils.

To confirm this Truth yet further, we need only consider the natural Evidence of the fundamental Laws of Morality, *viz. Do Good, and decline from Evil: Do as you would be done by; or, Do not do to another, what you would not have done to your self, &c.* These fundamental Laws are evidently agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason, or rather, the very Light of Nature dictates them to us; therefore what is contrary to them, is contrary to the very Light of natural Reason, which surely no one pretending to follow Reason, will deny to be Evil; therefore it is incumbent on all Men to live up to those sacred Laws, so evidently agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason. To shew yet further, the natural Evidence of these fundamental Laws, since it must be confessed by the Adversaries of Morality, that Reason is to be our Guide in the Conduct of our Lives, or they must own themselves brutal in their Liberties; let us consider whether these Principles are not the first Result of Reason, with respect to

Man and Man; whether any contrary Rules and Principles can be equally agreeable to Reason; as, *Follow Evil, and decline Good: Do to any Body, what you would condemn as an Injury if done to your self*, Maxims that would be shocking to human Nature; whether the former Rules are not founded in the Nature of the Things in itself, or whether, in fine, it is possible to prove any Thing to be certain in Practice, and the Duties of Life, unless those Fundamentals in Morals were certainly true: If nothing of this can be said, we must be downright Scepticks in the greatest Duties of Life, where Reason is to come in to our Assistance, if any where; but Scepticism is the most shameful Concession, and the last Streights a Person pretending to Reason can be reduced to. By Consequence, the Laws of Morality are evidently agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason, and obligatory on all Men. Then again, it is no less certain, that nothing can be more contrary to those first Principles of Nature, than the horrid Enormities mentioned above; therefore they are not to be committed, if we would act like rational Creatures, and not stand condemned by the very Light of Nature. One might add, that if we were to ask the Adversaries
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of Morality, what more certain Proofs they can bring against those Principles, or what possible Foundation, or what certain Criterion they can shew, that such Enormities are not Evil; we should meet with nothing, that could come up to the hundredth Part of the Evidences for natural Religion.

THUS, such wicked Actions are shewed to be Evil, both from their own natural Deformity, evidently discoverable in them, and from the Dictates of right Reason discovering the Object to us: And, as whatever is contrary to natural Evidence, discovering Truth or Falshood to us, must be true or false in itself; so whatever is contrary to natural Evidence in Morals, discovering to us that due Rectitude, or Deformity it has in itself, must be Good or Evil. We will proceed now to the third Head, from whence such Actions are shewn to be Evil, as being contrary to the most perfect and supreme Reason in God, from whom all Things derive their Essence, Nature, and Properties.

3. THE same Truth is proved from the very Notion of the Supreme Being, Author of all Nature, or from that eternal Law and most perfect Reason in God, from whence all Truths are derived, to which all rational
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Creatures ought to be subordinate, and by which they ought to square all their Actions. By this Rule, those inhuman Barbarities specified above, may be evidently prov'd to be most horrid Evils; because God being the *summa Ratio*, the most supreme and perfect Reason, and the Model, as well as Author, of all rational Beings, whatever is contrary to this most perfect and just Reason in God, must be Evil: It is presum'd so far must be allowed by all who believe in God; nor can any one deny his Existence, who examines the irrefragable Proofs for it^a. Now, what can be more unnaturally impious, than to maintain, that the enormous Cruelties, execrable Barbarities, Murders, Oppressions, and other brutal Abominations committed by Men, can ever be agreeable to the eternal, immutable, unerring Reason in God? Or what could attack more directly the essential Attributes of the Supreme Being, infinitely just, infinitely perfect and rational in all he does, than to assert that God could do to innocent Men, or even approve of what they do to one another? If it were Blasphemy to assert, that God can be guilty of the Crimes of Men, or that he could lye and deceive, as Men do one another; why

^a See Section II.

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why is it, but because such Crimes are repugnant to the most perfect Reason and Sanctity of God; if they are repugnant to the most just Ideas and Sanctity of God, they must be so in themselves, and also to our Reason, which, as it is derived from his, ought to be conformable to it, or else it must deviate from the most just Rules of the Supreme Reason. Those Enormities, therefore, must be most unnatural Evils, condemned by the eternal Law and Supreme Reason in God. This Argument alone were sufficient to determine the Point in Question, and ought to have greater Weight with the Deists, than others; because some of them, if not all, pretend that God is so good and tender a Father, in respect of his Creatures, that he cannot, without Cruelty, punish them for any Crimes they can commit against him. Can he, therefore, approve of those inhuman Cruelties and Barbarities they commit against one another? Can such Crimes be agreeable to his Divine Perfections? If they cannot, they must be hateful in his Sight, and condemnable by the most wise and just Judge in the Universe. By Consequence, any System destroying the eternal Differences between Good and Evil, must be directly contrary
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Part II. of LIFE, &c. III

to right Reason. Whether God can, or will punish such Enormities, shall be examined in due Place. In the mean time, what can be more unworthy the Dignity and Sanctity of God, than the impious Notions of some of our modern Infidels? Such as few Men are so happy, as to escape hearing their Blasphemies. On the other hand, what can be more agreeable to his infinite Wisdom, Justice, and Sanctity, than that all Men, in Imitation of their most sacred Maker, should be holy, righteous and just in Regard of all?

4. FOR a further Proof of this sacred Truth, we need only turn our Thoughts to the Consideration of an all-wise and provident Governor of the Universe, to be convinced of the Certainty of it. Surely the Deists, at least, will not deny such an all-wise and provident Governor over the World, as it will be proved more at large when we come to the Article of Providence: Such a Denial would be very unbecoming, to say no worse, any Person, who pretends to own the Deity; it would be very little better than to make a God of Straw of him. Let it suffice at present, to say, that, as it is certain, this glorious Fabrick could not be made by Chance, so Chance might possibly have destroyed it
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long ago, if it were not governed and preserved by the same all-wise and provident Care, by which it was made. Now, is it not evidently agreeable to right Reason, that it must be, not only the positive Will of this all-wise Governor, that in Imitation of his Divine Sanctity, Men should live piously in regard of the Supreme Being, soberly in regard of themselves, and justly with respect to one another, but also, that his infinite Wisdom, and providential Care over the Work of his Hands, could never abandon the moral Part of it, undoubtedly the most noble Share of all here below, without some certain Rules, some certain Order and Harmony necessary to be observed in it? This Consideration is evidently enforced by that Beauty and Harmony we see actually in the material Part of the Universe, where every Thing speaks Wisdom, Knowledge, and Design, of the Almighty Creator.

Now, this just Order necessary to be observed in the free Actions of Men, or the moral Part of the World, is nothing else but that Subordination due to his eternal Laws, and the squaring of our Lives to the Rules of Virtue, Justice, Equity, and Sanctity, according to the Notions which right Reason gives us of Good and Evil.

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Part II. of LIFE, &c. 113

By Consequence, all those, who abandon themselves to their ungovernable Passions, making no Distinction between either, evidently break in upon the universal, established Laws of the all-wise Governor of the World; which is still further enforced, on Account, that great Part of the Sins of Men tend to the Destruction of one another, as Murders, Mutilations, Whoredoms, &c. others tend to injure each other, and render their Lives less happy; by Consequence they fall under the Cognizance of the universal Governor, and Father of all. This brings us to the last Head proposed in the Proofs, *viz.* The horrid Disorders attending any System that endeavours to take away the Distinction between Good and Evil.

5. THE horrid Confusion necessarily attending the Want of such Obligations, and destroying all internal Duties, is an invincible Confirmation of the Truth in Question. One might ask any Man endowed with Thought, what would become of the most noble Part of this sublunary World, if there were no Order, no internal Obligations to be observed by Men; no Rules of Justice and Equity to square our Actions by; no Check or Restraint on our impetuous Passions; in short, no Good to be

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followed, nor Evil to be avoided? Without such Rules Men would become like wild Beasts, worrying one another, and devouring all that came in their Way; only that they would be infinitely more cunning and malicious. What Disorders, Crimes, and Abominations would they not be guilty of? What Miseries, Oppressions, Cruelties, and Barbarities would the World groan under, involving it in Time in its own Ruins, were there not some interior Light to shew them better Things? We see already, since such free-acting Systems began to prevail, what a Pass the World is come to; what an Inundation of Immoralities flows in upon us, what universal Lewdness, Cheating, Perjuries, Subornation, and all Manner of Corruption, is put in Practice, that it is almost out of our Power to guard against them. But, suppose such free-acting Notions were become universal; who could be secure of his Life, from his own Children, and dearest Friends, if there were no real internal Evil in perpetrating the greatest Crimes? It were in vain to have Recourse to external Laws and Punishments; those alone would never do; for all Crimes are not punished by the Executioner: Notwithstanding all the Proviso's, Laws, Compacts,

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Oaths, or Agreements made to the contrary: What horrid Things might be done with Impunity, if there were nothing else to keep Men in Awe? Neither, as I hinted just now, do all the Crimes of which Men may be guilty, always meet with their just Desert: If eternal Laws will not keep them in their Duty, will temporal ones do it? Do not those Cobweb Bulwarks, with which Mr. *Hobbes* would fence his State of War, shew us the absolute Necessity of some much more strong, to keep Men from tearing one another to Pieces? Therefore, if we can be sure of any Thing by the Light of Reason, we are sure there are moral Obligations to be observed by Men, independent of coercive Laws and Punishments.

WHAT the Particulars of these Obligations are, is rather more incumbent on the Deists to examine into, than others; because, since they allow of nothing, but their own Reason, and will follow no Prescriptions, but what they approve of themselves; and since right Reason evidently assures us, that there are very great Obligations, with respect to God, our Neighbours, and ourselves; they ought particularly to consider what they are; they ought to be solicitous, as they tender the Consequence

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quence of standing guilty of Evil in the Sight of an all-just God, how to prevent the Misfortune of it, and to be thoroughly informed of the Duties of their respective States. If they will not give themselves any uneasy Thoughts about it, it is sufficient, in this Place, that they ought in Reason to do it. We may make use of a favourite Maxim of theirs, *Qui vult decipi, decipitur*, He that will not see, let him be blind. On the whole, they must grant, that Libertins can have no Reason on their Side, when they deny the Obligation of Morality; much less, when they act contrary to it.

It is indubitable, therefore, with respect to all, who are not blinded with Passions and Prejudices, much easier to be taken against the Law, than for it; or, whose natural Faculties scarce exceed a brutal Stupidity; that since there must be some Laws of Morality incumbent on Men, to deviate from these Laws must be Evil, as acting contrary to those sacred Rules, that tell us what is to be done, and what not; and these Laws extending themselves to the Regulation of our Actions, in regard of God, our Neighbour, and ourselves, that there may be great Evils in all, or any of these Respects. A-

gain, since it is to be feared, that a great many Men do actually infringe these Laws, and that too in a heinous Manner, it is likewise to be feared, they lie under the Guilt and Deformity of heinous Evils in the Sight of the most high God.

2. THAT these two fundamental Principles of Morality, *Do Good*, and *decline from Evil*, are evidently obligatory in regard of all; since the same Reason, that demonstrates the Existence of Good and Evil, shews likewise, that one is to be done, and the other avoided.

3. THAT there is a Light of Nature in all Men, shewing them the Enormity of greater Crimes, and even lesser ones, if they would but diligently attend to it, and not let their Passions out-run their Reason: That to act contrary to what the Dictates of right Reason, or the positive Commands of God ordain or forbid, must be Evil; and it is chiefly by these Rules we are to know, whether we are guilty of Evil, or not.

4. THAT the Golden Rule, of doing as we would be done by, ought to be the Standard of our Actions, in regard of one another; so that a Man must be self-condemned, who does to any one else, what he would take to be an Injury, if done to himself.

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5. **THOUGH** it is not necessary in this Controversy, to enter into the Decision of what is Good or Evil in particular, more especially with respect to our modern Infidels, since the more Difficulty there is in determining the Particulars, the more will appear the Necessity of *Revelation*, which, by an incontestable Authority, might decide the Dispute: Nevertheless, as to some Particulars, it is evident, that those Enormities mentioned in the Body of the Question, or those in the former Section against God, as refusing him his due Honour and Worship, all Disobedience to his Commands, all execrable Oaths, Blasphemies, Perjuries, &c. must be unnatural Impieties: Then, all Things tending to the Destruction of the Universe, or of one another; as Murders, Mutilations, Duels, hellish Revenge, mortal Hatreds, and the like; to which Head, that is, to the Destruction of the Universe, beside their own inseparable Deformity, may be reduced all unnatural Lusts, procured Abortions, or Hindrance of Conception; or else scattering a Brood of Bastards over the World, either to die, or starve as soon as born; or else to be brought up to worse Ends: All these must be crying Abominations in the Sight of God,

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THAT all Extortions, Injustices, Cheats, Frauds, Thefts, depriving others of their due Rights; all Violations of the Marriage State, which no Man can bear done to himself; all false Testimonies, false Accusations, Subornations, and the like; all Treacheries, Perfidiousness, Breaches of Promises, Undermining, Entrapping, and Overreaching each other, which not only the Adversaries of Religion, but even Christians, will find, on Reflexion, to be against that fundamental Rule of Nature, *Do as you would be done by*, and must be worse in Christians, than others, because they know, that Christ, their Lawgiver, came not only to confirm the Law of Nature, but to give Grace and Helps to comply with it more perfectly. I say, all such Things in their due Proportion must be great Immoralities, when they come to be compar'd with the Dictates of right Reason, and that due Rectitude our Actions ought to have. But as to the grosser Enormities, it is evident, that, whoever thinks them not to be Evils, or not worthy the Notice of the all-just Governor of the World, must shut his Eyes against the Light of Reason, and be deaf to the Voice of Nature.

SECTION II.

*Objections against the Existence of
Evil, answered.*

ONE might think it were superfluous to spend much Time in solving the Objections against the Existence of moral Evil, considering the natural Evidence, as well as Matter of Fact, that there are most heinous Evils in the World; but as the malicious Wit of corrupt Nature can throw a Mist over the clearest Truths; as Mens Passions, and the Desire of a lawless Liberty, *i. e.* *Free-acting*, the real and chiefest End of *Free-thinking*, make them lay hold of any Thing against the Law, rather than the clearest Evidences for it: As, in fine, it is deplorable Matter of Fact, that a great many, who call themselves Deists, Free-thinkers, and modern Libertins, do actually and publickly scoff at all Obligations of Morality, throwing in specious Objections against the Existence of Evil, to seduce the Unwary, and propagate the System of no Religion, which, to the Scandal of true Religion, and indeed of all Civil Govern-

Government, encreases daily; on these Accounts it will not be improper to state their Objections in their true Colours, that the Light of Nature may shine forth with greater Brightness, when the Clouds, that endeavour to obscure it, are dissipated.

THE Reader is desired to observe, that most of the Objections against the Existence of Evil, are drawn from the wild Notions of some of the antient Hereticks, particularly the *Manichees*, and other Enemies of the true Religion; so that our modern Adversaries cannot pretend that they have found out any Thing new, but what has been known, and rejected by the learnedst Men of all Antiquity.

OBJECTION I. Mr. *Hobbes* invented a System, chiefly his own, in which he rather supposed, than proved, that all Right was founded in Power; and by Consequence, according to his Way of arguing, no Man can have an Injury done him; because the Aggressor is too powerful for him, &c. This has been refuted already in the first Part, and is evidently false, because there are eternal and essential Differences between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, founded in the Nature of the Thing, as opposite to one another, as the North and South Point in the Compass. And, suppose Mr. *Hobbes* himself

himself had been attacked by a Ruffian, who was not only going to strip him of all he had, but to murder him in the most barbarous Manner, when another Person came in to his Rescue, and, out of mere Humanity, saved his Life and Effects, I fancy he would have looked on the one Action to be good, and the other bad, in the very Nature of the Thing; so that Persons need only make it their own Case, to be convinced, that doing as one would be done by, is a Principle according to the Light of Nature.

THE Foundation of this impious System, according to the same Gentleman, is, what he supposes again, rather than proves, *viz.* That *Man is born in a State of War*, with respect to all Mankind beside; and as in War, every Thing is allowed to defend yourself, and offend your Enemy; so there is nothing can be Evil, with respect to Man and Man, unless it be Want of Power, &c.

ANSWER: It is to be feared, in the first Place, that Mr. *Hobbes* would have been no very fair Enemy, even in War, if nothing can be done wrong; for even in War there may be very great Excesses, and horrid Cruelties, which right Reason must certainly condemn, if done to one's self;
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and by Consequence, if done to others. But not to enter into the Conditions which render a War just, or unjust, as not belonging to this Place, they may be seen in the learned *Grotius, de Jure Belli & Pacis*. It is answered, *2dly*, That this supposed State of War, inverting the whole Order of Nature, is a mere *Gratis dictum*, and may be denied, as easily as asserted. On the contrary, it is much more natural to suppose, that Man originally was born in a State of Peace, to love, help, and save each other; till their exorbitant Passions shewed them, that there might be great Evils in the World. *3dly*, Such a State of War must be against the Dictates of right Reason, if there are Obligations in Nature in regard of God, our Neighbour, and ourselves: But that there are such Obligations, is evident from the Proofs of the Question; by Consequence, such an Objection can have no Weight, but with those, whose lawless Passions make them endeavour to confound the just Notions of right Reason, to palliate their own Crimes. *4thly*, I grant we are in a State of Warfare from our own violent Passions, which often hurry us on from attending to the Duties of Life, and are the Occasion of those frequent Injustices practised
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in the World: But who, but Persons deaf to all Cries of Nature, would draw an Argument from Fact to Right; like *Machiavill*, who, because the great Men in his Time made no Scruple of committing the greatest Crimes, laid it down as a Principle, that it was lawful for them to do any Thing. 5^{thly}, As Mr. *Hobbes* always openly acknowledged the Existence of God, as the Deists do now; it is Matter of Fact, that some Men do not render to God his due Worship: Is there none therefore due to him by Right? *Lastly*, Since right Reason tells us, we ought to do Good, and decline from Evil; to do as we would be done by; and to regulate our Actions, with respect to one another, by that Standard, not by Principles directly opposite to it, unless nothing can be contrary to right Reason, besides venturing one's Neck: Since Men may act contrary to the evident Light of it; nor can any Thing be more directly opposite to it, than that State of War Mr. *Hobbes* would have us think to be lawful; it follows, that either Evil itself must be rational, or Mr. *Hobbes's* System must be false.

HENCE, that infamous Sentence of his, *Injuria nemini fieri potest*, No one can have an Injury done him, ought to be looked upon,

upon, as the Result of very depraved Principles; or, as proceeding from an Understanding altogether clouded with Passion and Prejudice; since, whoever pretends to prove that wretched Proposition, must disprove all the Arguments for the Existence of Evil, not necessary to be repeated here, with all the Consequences and Disorders attending the Denial of it; nay, must maintain, that the greatest Cruelties and Barbarities, that can be acted on innocent Men, are according to the Dictates of right Reason, in God, as well as in Man; besides destroying all Truth and Certainty in our practical Judgments. But since it has been proved already, that Right is not founded in Power, no more than Dominion in the grand Rebellion was founded in Grace; it is needless to spend Time about a Proposition that is at War with all Nature.

OBJECTION II. The Permission of Evil, particularly attended with those dismal Consequences the Christians describe, seems inconsistent with the Notion of the Supreme Being, infinitely good and merciful, with respect to his Creatures; therefore there can be no moral Evil.

ANSWER: This, and some other following Objections, directly attack the Existence

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istence of God, as was partly shewn before; by Consequence, is not only directly false in itself, but proves too much, with respect to the Deists: Neither can it have any Weight with the Atheists, till they disprove the invincible Arguments that demonstrate his Existence, or think that such an Objection can be equivalent to those Arguments. But as our chief Business, in this Place, is with the Deists, it is evident, this Objection can have no Force with Persons, who ought to defend the Existence of God, as well as the Christians; since it is too certain Matter of Fact, that there are innumerable Evils in the World, and, it is to be feared, will be so till the End of it; as Wars, Plagues, Famine, Oppressions, Miseries, Deaths of all Kinds, which a good and merciful God does actually permit, which I believe the Deists will own to be very great Evils; and which, if there were no Sin, would be still harder to account for, because, in that Supposition, God would permit such Evils on a guiltless World; suffering innocent Persons to be oppressed with Miseries for no Fault: Must we, therefore, advance rashly, and even childishly, that there is no God at all?

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WHAT, therefore, must be said in this Case, by all, who are not Atheists? Why, since it is evident, that there are *de facto* very great Evils in the World, both natural and moral; and it being likewise evident, that there is a God infinitely wise and just, as well as good and merciful; we must acknowledge, that this infinitely wise God may have Ways and Means, Ends and Designs, which, *though we may not comprehend*, must be just and rational; this the Deists must own, as well as the Christians; and since woful Experience assures us, that the World groans under many Evils and Miseries, permitted actually by this just God, we are also sure, that such a Permission can never argue any Defect in him. The other Part of the Answer has been given to the like Objection, in the first Part, which, in short, is this, That God having made Man essentially free, as every one is conscious to himself of, he permits him to do what he thinks fit within the Sphere of his Abilities; if he chuses Evil in lieu of Good, Man alone is the Cause of all his Misfortunes, in that Respect. The Origin, therefore, of Evil, is the Abuse of free Will, which Experience too often convinces us, may be abused. On the whole, the Deists had better ask,
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how Men can be so perverse, as to chuse Evil instead of Good, and abuse their Liberty in Pursuit of such Things, as, they might know, ought not to be done? We ought to observe, by the Way, that the Christians can more rationally account for the Origin of Evil, than the Deists; by looking on the Evils of this Life, as the actual, or minatory Punishments for the Sins of Men; but, as that more properly belongs to another Question, it is sufficient against the Deists, in this Place, that there are undeniable Evils in the World; and since God does actually permit them, we are sure there are just Reasons for it.

HOWEVER, for the Reader's Satisfaction, I shall say a Word or two of the Origin of moral Evil, as far as it regards this Objection, leaving the rest to be explained, till we come to their Difficulties about original Sin. It is evident, that God may permit moral Evil, as well as natural; there being very little more Difficulty in the Permission of one, than in the Permission of the other: For is not one often attended with the other? Does not God permit Murders, Blasphemies, &c? Are these good in a moral Sense? It is likewise evident, that God may permit, or even inflict, natural Evils, as Sicknesses, Miseries,

Miseries, Death, and the like, in Punishment of Man's wilful Defect, in forsaking his natural Duty. Now, since there are *de facto* innumerable natural Evils permitted by an all-just God, does not this lead us to the Consideration of some Fault in Man *ab Origine*, for which these Miseries are permitted? Do not we also find, that though the Light of Nature shews us ^a better Things, yet our Passions and Concupiscence are still tugging against the Law? Again, Are we not sensible of some Weakness within us, which we cannot account for, but find it stands in need of some superior Help to strengthen us in our Trials? For the first, the Christians have Recourse to original, and actual Sin in Man, for which such Punishments and Miseries are permitted: For the second, they refer those Wounds given to our natural Faculties, to the same Sin for which we stand in need of God's healing and strengthening Grace: So that, as was observed, the Christians can much better account for the Origin of these Evils, than the Deists. But this original Sin being one of the Mysteries of Christianity, this Consideration will be further confirmed, when we come to that

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^a Video meliora, &c.

Part, and in the Answer to the Objection immediately following.

OBJECTION III. The celebrated Monsieur *Bayle* ^b has an Objection against the Existence of Evil, which he thinks insoluble, at least, without the Help of Revelation, (though that were sufficient.) The Substance of it is this: God Almighty, with one Act of his Will, or, by the Efficacy of his Divine Grace, could have prevented the dismal Misfortunes of Evil, with all the Consequences of it; from whence, he thinks, may be inferred, that he was malevolent, and by Consequence, responsible for it; or we must conclude with the *Manichees*, that there are two Principles, one the Cause of Good, the other the Cause of Evil.

ANSWER I. The Deists are obliged to solve this Objection, as well as the Christians; for the God whom they must acknowledge, or make a Chimæra of him, could have prevented all the natural Evils and Miseries which the World has, does actually, and very likely, in some Part or other, will groan under. Is he therefore malevolent, or impotent, and by Consequence, no God at all, because he permits them? Or, Must there be two Principles,

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^b In the Article of the *Manichees*, & alibi.

a good and a bad one, independent of each other, with all the innumerable Absurdities attending such a System? The Consequence, likewise, which the Objection draws after it, is a very lame one, *i. e.* that God must be responsible for all the Evils he will not prevent; for surely God may permit Man to make use of his free Choice, and not be responsible for the Abuse of his Liberty. It is evident, this Objection attacks Deism, as well as Christianity, and is overthrown by the Arguments evincing the Existence of God. For it is arguing against certain Fact, to deny, that there are very great Evils in the World. It is also evident, God can neither be unjust, cruel, nor guilty of Evil. It is likewise Fact, that Men do not honour this God, as they ought to do; yet have free Will and Power to do it: It is, therefore, Man alone that is responsible for it. If it could only be solved by Revelation, that were sufficient, since all the Mysteries of Christianity, though they may be incomprehensible, are highly credible: But this Difficulty is not so great, as to be insoluble by natural Reason. In order thereto,

ANSWER II. That there may be, in a proper Sense, an original Principle of moral Evil, distinct from God, that is, the perverse

Will of Man capable of Defect, and deviating from that due Rectitude he ought to observe in all his Actions; and though Monsieur *Bayle* was a *French* Refugee, and educated among those, who made no Difficulty in believing God to be the Author of Sin; nevertheless, beside that such a System is inconsistent with the Sanctity and Equity of the Supreme Being, and even shocking to imagine, there is no need to have Recourse to such an impious Notion, to solve this Difficulty; since every Man may avoid the Crimes he is going to commit, if he would but timely make use of the proper Helps and Remedies, the Author of his Being, and the Light of Nature, might supply him with. By Consequence, it may also be answered, that God does what is requisite on his Side, to prevent Evil, by being ready to supply him with those Helps and Remedies, in order to avoid it, and sufficiently notifying his Detestation of it. Might it not also be answered, that the same perverse Will of Man might render him unworthy of a particular Grace? Not to mention that Help, Mr. *Bayle* would insinuate to be necessary, that is, a *Calvinistical* forcing of the Will, inconsistent with the Nature of Liberty, which cannot be forced even to Good, in

a moral Sense, without destroying the essential Notion of free Will; by Consequence, God cannot be obliged to prevent Evil in that Sense. Further, we may be assured by natural Reason, that an all-wise and intelligent Being, infinite in all Perfections, as God is, may have Ways and Views in the Permission of Evil, reconcileable with Reason, though we should not be able to comprehend them: Nay, if all his Ways were comprehensible by our limited Capacities, they would not be infinitely perfect. Thus it is evident by natural Reason, that Man is the first and only Cause of moral Evil, in this mortal State; and that God may permit it, without being impotent, or malevolent, or responsible for it; which is still more confirmed, when we consider, that God, without being obliged to prevent all the Wickedness of Men, who voluntarily chuse Evil, in Lieu of Good, not only gives us the Faculty of distinguishing between both, and seeing, that Good is to be done, Evil to be avoided, but evidently shews us, that there must be suitable Rewards and Punishments for the Goods and Evils of this Life; as we shall shew by and by.

OBJECTION IV. Some Moderns have endeavoured to establish the Impossibility

of free Will, and, by that Means, to destroy the Existence of moral Good and Evil.

BUT such a Notion is absolutely false, as every Man's proper Experience convinces him. One may answer, therefore, in short, without entering into a Labyrinth of abstruse Notions and Intricacies, with which some People endeavour to perplex a Truth, as certain, by our own Experience, as that we have a rational Being, that free Will being a Power within us, of acting, or not acting, as we think fit, it is plain Matter of Fact, there is such a Power within us. For Example; A Person asks me to take a Walk with him into the Fields; another, at the same Time, asks me to go and drink a Glass of Wine with him: I can go with whom I please; and to shew that it is not another Man's Will, that determines mine, I can refuse either. Then, to shew that I am not necessitated, or forced by my own Determination once passed, I can rise up and leave them, when I think fit, unless they retain me by some external Force. Cannot I also do the same, if they ask me to commit an evil Action? All the Arguments, therefore, against free Will are like *Zeno's* against Motion, which *Diogenes* solved by going away from him.

THERE is a Difficulty about free Will, which Persons, not thoroughly versed in Philosophy, magnify beyond the Stretch of exact Reasoning, that is, from the Prescience of God; as if barely foreseeing, that an Action will happen, makes it happen by Necessity. The Fallacy of this Way of Reasoning is shewn, by supposing a free Action were foreseen for certain, by the Prescience of God; in that Supposition it would be free, and not free, which is a Contradiction; therefore certain Fore-knowledge, precisely as such, does not alter the Nature of an Action in itself. Suppose I stood upon a Tower, and saw a Man at a great Distance, going strait on towards a secret Pit; I am sure, if he does not turn off, he will fall in: Is my seeing him, or not seeing him, any Ways the Cause of his falling into the Pit? Not in the least: By Consequence, the bare Prescience of an Action, neither makes it free, or not free: So that this Difficulty can have no just Force against our Liberty.

OBJECTION V. Some Men, and even Nations, are ignorant of the first Principles of Morality; at least, there is scarce any one Particular to be assign'd, even wilful Murder, but some People may think it lawful; and so of the rest: Now, if there

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were a Law of Nature, stamp'd on the Hearts of Men, as the Christians teach, sure it is not confined to one Sect, or Nation, but ought to be the same in every one.

ANSWER: The Deists are very unhappy in this, that most of their Arguments are as much against their own System, as against Christianity, and are to be solved by themselves, if they really believe the Existence of God. This Argument, particularly drawn from the Ignorance of wicked, and savage People, may be urged against them; for some People will openly profess their Ignorance of any God at all; nay, directly deny and impugn his Existence: Does it follow from that Head, that there is no God? Whether such Persons speak according to their inward Sentiments, or not, does not belong to this Controversy; nor does such a Denial invalidate the irrefragable Force of the Arguments for his Existence; which see in the Preliminaries. However, this is certain, that the Force of Passions, Prejudice, and Prepossession, is prodigious, even in Men of Learning and Sense, in other Respects, and may obscure a great many Truths, which, on a due Application to the Proofs for them, would appear to be absolutely certain: But, put the Case
some

some Persons should be so abandoned to their Passions, and so far blinded with Prejudices, as by Degrees, for Want of a due Application, and other Causes, should fall into such a reprobate Sense, as to say in their Hearts, That there is no God; yet, I hope, such an affected and culpable Ignorance would not disprove his Existence; nay, his Existence for all that would be absolutely demonstrable to all Persons, who do not draw a Veil over their Eyes. In like Manner, Suppose some Persons should have their Reason so far clouded with Prejudices, as to think the most unnatural Crimes to be lawful, or indifferent; yet their affected Ignorance can never be a conclusive Argument, that they are so in themselves. If then, some Persons, or Nations, were as ignorant, or impious, as the Objector would have them to be, it does not follow, but that they are highly to blame for it. The Question, therefore, is not, Whether some act, as if nothing were unlawful, but whether they ought to do so; and by Consequence, if it be absolutely certain, that Blasphemy is evil, as undoubtedly it is, all the Wickedness and Blindness of Men will never make it good, lawful, or indifferent. So waving the Dispute, Whether those barbarous Nations, the Objec-
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tion hints at, have any Remorse or Adversity of their Guilt, our modern Libertins will never be able to prove, that their Disorders are rational, from the Ignorance of others. See the Answer to the like Objection, with respect to the Worship of God, SECT. V. Nevertheless,

2dly, IT is not to be imagined, that whole Nations can be so blind and barbarous, as to be totally ignorant of the Existence of moral Good and Evil. It is true, Persons may have very wrong Notions in Matters of the greatest Concern to human Life: It is possible, likewise, that your barbarous Tyrants having full Power in their own Hands, and may be said to be drunk with Power; I say, such Persons in the full Swing of their Passions, may think it lawful to dispose of the Lives and Fortunes of their reputed Slaves, as they think fit; yet they would think themselves hardly dealt with, if they were to suffer what they do to others: Nay, our modern Infidels would cry out, that they were *really injured*, were they to be turned out of House and Home, or torn to Pieces without any Provocation. Therefore, all have some Notion of the Law of Nature, tho' Self-Love may make them blind on one Side.

WELL,

WELL, but if there should be such an Ignorance of the very first Principles of Morality among some barbarous Nations, though it could not do the Deists any Good, as it is evident it cannot; Does it not, on the whole, seem to invalidate the Belief of the Law of Nature imprinted on the Hearts of Men, as the Christians generally believe? Not at all; though the Hypothesis is not to be allowed: For some Persons may put out their own Eyes; Must Mankind therefore be deprived of the Faculty of Seeing? Again, Suppose in Punishment of such a Crime, one Man's Offspring should be born blind, Must we say, that none can see? How far Want of Improvement of our received Faculties, Prejudices of Infancy, Errors of Education, Corruption of Manners, indulged Passions, much more strong against the Law, than for it, with a great Stock of Pride and Self-Love, and the Punishments attending them, may go, is not necessary to define: Though all must grant the Effects of them to be most deplorable, our modern Infidels being a flagrant Example.

OBJECTION VI. Is that blasphemous, but too common Plea of the Libertins of our Age, *viz.* That since I have all my Faculties from God, whatever these lead
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me to, is Good; or, if Evil, God is responsible for giving me those Inclinations. This pert Piece of Blasphemy is in almost every Libertin's Mouth, while the unthinking Creatures run away with it, as if it were a full Justification of their Crimes. But, suppose their Companion's Inclinations lead him to poison them, or cut their Throats, &c. I fancy they would think it a real and wicked Injury. The Answer therefore is obvious,

I/ſ, THAT whatever my Inclinations, guided by right Reason, and the Commands of God, lead me to, is Good; but, if they lead me contrary to the Light of Nature, or to what is an indispensable Obligation upon me, it must be Evil. This Distinction is so just and obvious, that it needs no further Explanation; since it is evident, some Mens Inclinations lead them to what is directly contrary to the Dictates of right Reason, as those Enormities mentioned in the Beginning of the Question. Again, though the Powers and Faculties of our Soul are originally from God, the Abuse of them is from ourselves; therefore the Evil, which is the Abuse of them, lies at our own Door.

THUS it is evident, God gives no one Inclinations to Evil; but, on the contrary, desires

desires that our Faculties should be employed in doing Good: What is Evil in them, is the Deficiency and Want of due Rectitude in what we do, which is incompatible with the Perfections of God. It is true, God takes Care of, and gives Direction to our Faculties, as far as is consistent with free Agents, by rewarding Good, and punishing Evil, as will be seen in its proper Place; and that too, as discoverable by natural Reason: He takes Care of them, by notifying his Will to us; he takes Care of them, by imprinting a conscientious Sense on our Hearts, by which, if we did not endeavour to stifle it, we might know what was to be done, and what was to be avoided, in the more obvious Points of our Duty: He takes Care of them, by exciting and helping us by his Divine Grace, &c. But since he has given us free Will, and endowed us with the noble Light of Reason, we must also take Care of them ourselves, and not blame God for making us free, rational Creatures, rather than stupid Animals, or no Beings at all.

IT were endless to dwell on all the frivolous Cavils of wicked Men, in order to find out Excuses for their Sins. Some are come to that Degree of Effrontery, as to ask, How is it possible to resist the Temptations

tations of this World, the beautiful Objects, and alluring Charms of Flesh and Blood, &c? If they were serious in asking such a Question, it may be answered, By begging the Assistance of God's holy Grace on our Endeavours; by expecting a little while, till we come to a better Life; by considering the Vanity, Folly, and Emptiness of what they have enjoyed hitherto; by reflecting on the Shortness of the Time we have to enjoy the Pleasures of this Life, not to enjoy them faster, but to prepare for that better Life, which shall never have an End; by going down in Spirit into the Grave, whither we all hasten, and there computing what Good all the Enjoyments of this World will do us, when we come to the lasting Home of all Flesh; by considering, in fine, what a Madness it is to run the Risque of eternal Consequences for such Follies. Such Reasonings as these would do our modern Free-thinkers more Good, and solve their Difficulties much sooner, than running on in such wicked and fruitless Speculations; for it is indubitable, that such Exorbitances in their Practice, are as unaccountable and extravagant, as the most romantick Fictions are in Reason.

ON the whole, they had better confess ingenuously, that they will not take any Pains to resist the present Charms of Flesh and Blood; that they will not bear the rigid Laws of Morality, nor tie themselves up to the straight and narrow Paths of Virtue; but are resolved to have their full Swing and Portion in this World; I say, better than to endeavour to palliate their corrupt Principles with the Appearance of Reason. In the first Case, one may be inclined to believe they speak their real Sentiments; but never in the second. However, to convince them, that they are in the Wrong in that Point, as well as the other, we will take into Consideration some further Corollaries and Inferences following from the foregoing Doctrine.

S E C T I O N I I I .

Corollaries and Consequences of the foregoing Doctrine.

C O R O L L A R Y I .

That there is a PROVIDENCE over the Moral Part of the World, as well as over the Physical. And that too, rewarding Good, and punishing Evil.

THOUGH the Arguments for a Providence over the *Physical Part* of the World, seem to carry a more glaring Evidence along with them; yet those for a Providence over the *Moral Part* are full as conclusive, when considered with due Attention. As to the material Part, with the productive and preserving Causes of it, every Thing points out to us the Hand of God, and the least Insect demonstrates the Wonders of his Wisdom; infomuch, that almost every Author, who has treated of that Subject, has demonstrated the Truth of an all-disposing Providence. But in the Moral

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Moral Part; as few have treated of it expressly and distinctly from the Physical Part; so several Difficulties occur at first View, which the Unthinking and Unstable wrest to their own Perdition. For Instance, the general Prosperity of the Wicked, in this World, and the Depression of the Good; the Success and Prevalence of human Policy over the sincere and upright Intentions of the Virtuous; with the unequal Distributions of the Goods and Evils of this Life, and the like, may make the Wicked say in their Hearts, That God has no Concern for human Actions. But these Difficulties will vanish like Smoke, when the Rays of the Divine Providence are set in Opposition to them; on which Account it will appear beyond any reasonable Contradiction, that even *human and free Actions* are subject to the Laws of an all-foreseeing and disposing Providence.

1. As to the Material and Physical Part of the Universe, that this World was produced by an all-wise, intelligent, and prudent Cause, the Deists, who are really such, I think, do not pretend to deny; only letting fall some oblique Conjectures against it by the By: Nor can the Atheists deny it, without reducing all the glorious Effects, all the beauteous Order and Harmony,

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mony, conspicuous in every Part of the Universe, to inexplicable and inconceivable Chance; or a fatal Necessity equally inconceivable. See PART I. SECT. II.

2. THAT the same universal, all-wise, intelligent, prudent Cause governs, moderates, and preserves the Universe in general, in the same Order in which it continues at present, is equally certain, for the same Reason; neither do I believe the Deists dare openly deny it: For otherwise, tho' the World could not be made by Chance, it might possibly be destroyed by Chance, if there were nothing else to preserve it. In short, the Stress of the Difficulty concerning Providence cannot lie here; and the Deists would give the Christians too open an Advantage against them, did they offer to call it in Question.

3. THAT this universal Cause must know and comprehend all the Powers, Natures, Effects, Reasons, Relations, Exigences of all his Creatures, of which he is the Supreme Maker, Ruler, and Preserver, with all that can happen to the Works of his Hands, and prevent every Thing that might destroy it; otherwise he would be ignorant, or impotent in those Respects. So that nothing can happen without his
Know-

Knowledge, or even against his Will, effective, or permissive.

4. THAT nothing in this visible World is beneath the Care of this universal, intelligent Cause, from the greatest of the celestial Bodies, to the least Worm crawling on the Earth; wherein such infinite Art is seen, in the Structure of the least Mite, as surpasses our Comprehension. On the contrary, as they were worth his Care in producing them according to the Rules of infinite Wisdom, it must be a Kind of Stupidity to imagine them not worth his Care, to see them go on and continue in that State, agreeable to the Designs and Ends for which he created them.

5. As to the free Actions of Men, that God not only knows all their Thoughts, Words, and Actions, with all they can do, or design; but also what they ought to do, or what is just and proper to be done by them, with all the Obligations incumbent upon each one in their respective States. In short, all the Immoralities, Crimes, and Abominations, committed by Men, are perfectly and distinctly open to his Sight.

6. THAT this universal Cause, Author, and Father of all Things, must be entirely

just and equal in regard of his Creatures^a. Any other Notion would be highly injurious to his Divine Perfections. This the Deists, at least, will easily allow, and endeavour sometimes to draw an Objection from it, against the Dispensation of the old and new Law.

7. THAT the great God of Heaven and Earth has it in his Power, notwithstanding the seeming *Inequality* of the Goods and Evils of this Life, to make an exact Equality and Compensation, by proportionable Rewards for the Good, and Punishments for the Wicked; I say it is undeniable that God has Power to do this; nor can any Thing be more just and natural in itself, or more consonant to right Reason, than that there should be such proportionable Rewards and Punishments, in order to bring Matters to a perfect Equality, either here, or hereafter.

FROM these Heads it is easy to demonstrate the Truth of the foregoing Corollary, as to both its Parts. I shall not dwell any longer on the Proofs of the first Part, *i. e.* of a Providence over the Material World, or Physical Part of it, with its innumerable Varieties, Causes, and Effects; which

^a What Distinction may be made on Account of foreseen Faults, does not belong to this Place.

which almost every one, who has wrote on the Subject, has proved to a Demonstration: All these taken together, render it one of the most certain Truths in Nature.

BUT, does not this also demonstrate a Providence over the Moral Part of the World, as well as over the Material? Are not human Actions, with all the Designs, Counsels, Causes, Effects, Revolutions depending on them, and Consequences attending them, as noble a Share of this lower World, as the Laws of Motion and Gravitation, with the other Mutations and Modifications of Matter? Are the noble, free Actions of Men unworthy the Care of God, if the meanest Insect is not? Do not these bear a great Share in the Physical Part of the World? Do not they often interfere with the Direction of it? Shall we imagine, that when God has created all things else in Weight and Measure, according to the just Dictates of infinite Art and Knowledge, he has no Ends, no Designs, or, in Effect, no Hand in the free Actions of Men? Are not these capable of being directed to as noble Ends, as mere Matter? Do not the Operations of rational Beings as much redound to his Honour, as the most glorious Effects we can mark out in

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Nature beside? On the other hand, Is not the almost infinite Race of Men, let them be as much Masters of the World as they please, as intirely dependent on the universal Cause, as the least Atom, that is carried away with a Puff of Wind? Are not their Hearts and their Thoughts intirely in his Hand? Does he not contain all their Powers? Does he not know all their Designs? Does he not see the Tendency of all they can do, from the least Thought that lies in Embryo, to the most mighty Projects, that ever were formed by human Wit? Can any one therefore imagine, that Men, undoubtedly the noblest Part of all we can see in this lower Creation, are exempt from, or beneath the Care of the universal Cause? If we cannot imagine this, without falling into the grossest Absurdities, it is beyond Dispute, that the moral and free Actions of Men, with respect to God, their Neighbour, and themselves, with the Consequences and Effects attending them, make up the chiefest Part of human Life; neither can we properly call them Men, but with respect to such free Actions: Therefore they are subject to the Laws of Providence.

THUS, not to insist any more, than what has been said already, on the universal

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versal Laws of Morality, which may be looked upon, as Boundaries fet by the Author of Nature, for the Actions of Men; and as certain Marks by which they are to steer their Course during this mortal Life; or the Knowledge of Good and Evil in general, which seems to be stamp'd on their Hearts, unless obscured by overpowering Passions; or that Confusion in which the World would be involved, were not the Actions of Men moderated and governed by some superior Power watching over them: I say, besides this, if none but downright Atheists can deny, and that too contrary to the greatest Evidences, that the Material World is governed by an all-disposing Providence, How can any Persons call themselves Deists, and dare to maintain, that God either has no Knowledge, or no Concern for the noblest Part of the Universe, that is, Men, and their moral, free Actions? For these, and other Reasons to be mentioned in the following Part of this Corollary, inferring and enforcing each other, it is manifest, there must be a Providence over human Affairs; not only as they are Physical Entities, but as they are Moral.

C O R O L L A R Y II.

*--And that too, rewarding Good,
and punishing Evil.*

THE sacred Truths of natural Religion so clearly infer each other, that it is only applying what has been already proved, to see the just Connexion that is between them. Hence, as it is evident from what has been said, that there is a Divine Providence watching over every Part of the World; so it is no less evident, that since the same Providence cannot, in a moral Sense, force free Agents to Good or Evil, unless we call the most natural and just Motives by the Name of Force; and considering the prodigious Inequality, so evidently conspicuous in the Goods and Evils of this Life, we must allow, that God both can, and does direct the Wills and Actions of Men by Ways and Means agreeable to the Natures of rational and free Beings. As *first*, by signifying his holy Will to them, by Precepts, Commands, Examples, &c. by laying before them the respective Obligations of their Duty;

Duty; by proposing suitable Rewards and Punishments, to encourage them in Good, and deter them from Evil. And, *lastly*, if they will be making one another miserable in this Life, by their Cruelties and Oppressions, the same Reason that declares his Providence, shews, that God, as an equal Father to all, will, some Time or other, bring all Things to a just Equality, making a suitable Compensation for the Goods and Evils of this Life, that is, reward one, and punish the other.

1. Now, upon the whole, what can be more contrary to the very Nature and Idea of the all-just Governor of the Universe, than to leave the almost infinite Series of human Actions, as it were, to Hap-Hazard, turning the World topsy-turvy, tearing one another to Pieces, by Murders, Rapines, Injustices, and Oppressions of all Kinds; abandoned to all Manner of Wickedness and Impieties, so rife in all Parts of the World, (for it has been proved abundantly, that there are such Evils) involving innocent Persons in the most horrid Confusion, without any Care and Concern for it, without applying some suitable Remedies to such dismal Misfortunes, or introducing some Equality for the Evils suffered here without Redress? If such a remiss

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Neglect be inconsistent with the Idea of an all-wise and just Governor of the Universe, and the Matter of Fact of these Enormities being but too certain, How can we imagine such an Equality and just Compensation can be made, but by suitable Rewards and Punishments for Good and Evil? It is in vain to say, that Virtue is a Reward for itself; not only because the Virtuous are generally the most oppressed; but, though they should meet with that Comfort in their Sufferings, which the Wicked cannot enjoy in their greatest Prosperity; yet this, perhaps, being known to none but God and themselves, it does not vindicate the publick Justice of God in the Eyes of the World; so that the Equality must be in the next Life. *Lastly*, Because the chief Comfort of the Virtuous in this Life, is, that they are sure of an all-just and compassionate Inspector of their Sufferings, who can return an Hundred-fold in their Bosoms, for what they endure for his Sake.

2. GOD not only can, but certainly does, see and know all the Actions of Men, as they are good and bad: They are all actually and distinctly present to the Eye of his Providence: He traces them thro' all the Labyrinths of their Thoughts;
he

he penetrates all their deepest Designs; he numbers all the Steps they take; he sees on the one Hand, the Piety and Sanctity of his Children, with the Miseries and Afflictions they undergo; he sees on the other Side, the horrid Oppressions, Impieties, crying Injustices, execrable Crimes and Barbarities of others; nay, what is more, he sees his Friends oftentimes persecuted for his Sake, because they will not give his Glory to another, or forsake the Paths of Virtue. To advance, therefore, that God takes no Care of all this, nor has any Concern for what passes in his Government, is not only inconsistent with right Reason, and tends to destroy the very Notion of an all-just God, but may be reduced to downright Atheism. Now, if he has a Concern for them, it must be Want of Power, or Want of Will, that can hinder him from making a just and equal Compensation for all the Evils suffered for Virtue's Sake; both which are repugnant to his Divine Perfections; by Consequence, he has laid up, in the Treasures of his Justice and Mercy, some Ways and Means to bring all Things to a just Equality.

3. HEINOUS Crimes evidently deserve Punishment, and good Deeds a Reward and Encouragement, according to the most
just

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just and natural Notion of Things; neither can it suit with infinite Justice and Goodness, to put Guilt and Innocence on the same Footing; by Consequence, the Good and Bad, the Innocent and Guilty, of this Life, must be placed in different Conditions, call them Rewards and Punishments as you please: Therefore, our modern Libertins, when they deny any Rewards or Punishments, due to good or bad Actions, evidently contradict the just and natural Dictates of right Reason.

4. To make a short Recapitulation of the Whole: If the Material World could neither be produced, nor continued and preserved in that harmonious Order, shining thro' every Part of it, by mere Chance, or without the perpetual Care of Providence watching over it; if Men and their moral and free Actions are infinitely the most noble Share of all we can see in our System; if all they can do, think, or design, is distinctly present to the Eyes of God; if these Actions of Men may, and ought to be directed by the eternal Obligations of Good and Evil; if there are, in Fact, most horrid Infractions of these Obligations, and most heinous Evils existent in the World, some of them, as far as in them lies, attacking the very Godhead itself; if the

the whole Earth seems to groan under the Burthen of monstrous Impieties oppressing it on all Sides, crying to Heaven for Vengeance, according to the elegant Phrase of the Holy Scripture; if there is no Help, no Redress to be had from Men, but rather an Encrease of Miseries, and Enormities heaped up, *usque ad Cumulum*: On the other Hand, if there is an all-wise, good, just, equitable God, who hears, sees, and takes down in his eternal Records, all that passes in his Government, from the most flagrant Enormities to the most secret Thoughts; Can there be any Thing more unnatural, and unreasonable, than to advance, that all Things are left to Fate, or Chance; or more agreeable to Reason, than that the Treasures of the most High, both can and will make a just and equal Compensation for the Goods and Evils of this Life? In that Case, the Good will be proportionably exalted, and the Wicked depressed; which will be evident Rewards and Punishments.

ONE might here pass over all the temporal Signs and Tokens of God's avenging Justice on a wicked World, with all the Strokes of his terrible Judgments, from Time to Time; which, if rightly considered, might vindicate his Providence, and
justify

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justify his Wisdom in all his Works. Notwithstanding the Prosperity the Wicked seem to enjoy in this World, an unprejudiced Mind might trace out the Steps of Providence through all the various Events and Revolutions of human Affairs; where, beside the terrible Judgments of Wars, Plagues, Famines, and Desolations, Signs, and Prodigies from Heaven, and the like, our modern Libertins, if they were capable of Reflection, might see the Wicked and Impious often raised up to punish others still more wicked; they might see Empires, Kingdoms, and Commonwealths laid as low, as ever they were exalted in Pride and Power; they might see the great and mighty ones of the Earth, dwindle into Dust, and their Memories perish with the Sound thereof; they might see Tyrants and Oppressors liable to the same Punishments they inflicted upon others; they might see those, that were as prosperous in their Designs, as powerful in their Impieties, as successful in their Counsels, as flourishing in their Riches, as happy in their Pleasures, and as easy in their Vices, as Men can be now, all to end in Smoke and Stench; they might see Murder pursued by its own Guilt, Envy stung to Death by its own Snakes, Ambition rack'd
by

by its own Projects, human Policy destroyed by its own Engines, Pride tumbled down by its own Height, Vice rotten in its own Corruption. In a Word, every Age, Nation, and Place, will furnish us with frequent Instances, either of exemplary Punishments of God's Justice; or sufficient Warnings of his Displeasure, so as never to leave Men, first or last, without some Signs and Marks of his holy Will; by which we might be informed, that his Providence watches over the Actions of Men: And though, on the one Side, he never forces our free Will; and on the other, his Mercy hinders him from destroying the Wicked, immediately in their enormities, dissembling the Sins of Men to give them Time to repent; yet he is still a perpetual Inspector over their Actions, and will, first or last, render to every one according to his Works.

SECTION IV.

Some Difficulties and Objections against Providence, answered.

AS wicked Men will try all Ways to excuse their Impieties, our modern Infidels endeavour, with all their Power, to obscure the Evidence of Divine Providence, and start a great many Difficulties; which, if passed over unanswered, may give them an Occasion to glory in their Errors; for some of them will vaunt, that they cannot be answered at all. On which Account it is necessary to state them in their full Light, especially such as are openly, and almost blasphemously, advanced against it.

THE first Objection is that common, but impious Topick, which serves on all Occasions, *viz.* That God only made us for his Recreation, leaving us to use, or abuse our free Will, as we think fit. But, as this is advanced without any further Proof, it may be denied as directly false in Terms, * as the Proofs for Providence just before

* See the first Part.

before alledged evidently shew; nay, it is impossible that the free Actions of Men should be out of the Care and Inspection of God: And what a barbarous Notion must Persons have of the Supreme Deity, to say, that he sports himself with human Misery? Which must follow, if the free Actions of Men, the Cause of so much Miseries in the World, distinctly seen by him in all their Circumstances, should not be under his Care; particularly, when it is in his Power to make a just Compensation for all. It is needless here, to repeat the Proofs for Providence, since this Objection has no other Difficulty but what is directly invalidated by them.

ANOTHER Objection is drawn from some Difficulties occurring in explaining the Operations of Providence, which, tho' we might not comprehend, ought not to have any Weight in Opposition to the Proofs for it; as if we must deny the Attributes of God, because we cannot comprehend them! Such an unjust Way of Reasoning is obvious to Persons of any moderate Capacity. However, for the Reader's Satisfaction, we will put them in their true Light, as they are stated by the Adversaries of Providence. God Almighty, say they, having made the World accord-

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ing to the Dictates of infinite Wisdom, leaves all the rest to second Causes; neither is it necessary there should be any particular Direction over the same Causes; neither does it agree with the all-wise Artificer, that his Works should want mending, or even watching over them; nor, in fine, can it be said without Blasphemy, that God has any directive Power over human Affairs, as they are generally carried on, but at the most, only a permissive.

ANSWER. 1st, Here are a great many hard Points huddled together, some true, some false, and some ambiguous; but none of them, when they come to be explained, will do the Cause of real Deists any Good: It is very well they are so tender of Blasphemy, and the Honour of God; it shews it can be no indifferent Thing; and that God has a Concern for human Affairs, as far as it regards his own Honour; which, rightly applied, would carry us a great Way, as to the rest. But to come to the Particulars of this Objection, one may naturally ask them,

2^{dly}, WHAT it is, they mean by that Sentence, of *leaving all Things to second Causes*? Since it naturally implies, that God does not leave all Things to Chance; particularly, since they own, that he made

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all Things according to the Dictates of infinite Wisdom, disposing them with so much Art, and giving them such universal Influences from the Beginning, that they should never fail, or vary from the eternal Rules prescribed to them; foreseeing and providing against all Impediments likely to hinder his designed Effects; comprehending the whole Extent of their Virtue, knowing what they will, or will not do, from all Eternity; in short, taking such Measures, that all Things, even those he only permits, should correspond with his all-wise, though to us unknown, Ends. This Sense of that Expression can do the Deists very little Good, and proves, in Terms, a general Providence: Particularly, if we must admit those Influences to persevere, and remain with his Works, as long as they are to last, which we must grant, or fall foul on his infinite Wisdom, or Power, or both; it were sufficient in this Place, to prove, that all the Actions of Men, moral and physical, are governed by an universal, all-foreseeing Providence, with such universal Influences and Directions, as may extend themselves to all the Effects producible by them, both moral and physical, to the End of the World.

BUT, if they would insinuate, that when God had once made the World, he left all Things to Chance-Medley, without any further Care and Direction of them; it favours very much of Atheism, by making a God of Straw of him, and is confuted by all the Arguments for Providence.

As to the other Instance, *viz.* That it is not necessary there should be any particular Direction over such Causes, the Answer is much the same, It is not necessary that there should be any particular *Providences*, or as many as there are Effects, or any *new* Direction over human Affairs; one universal Direction being sufficient: But it is necessary, that the same Providence should extend itself over every particular Effect, though one and the same in itself from all Eternity: If there were not such a particular Direction, some Things might happen without God's Permission at least, or even without his Knowledge; from whence it would follow, that God was ignorant of such Effects, and by Consequence, no God; beside, that all created Beings must have had a distinct Cause from themselves, and, indeed, shew that they were produced with infinite Wisdom and Art; much more ought the moral Part of the World to be under

under the Direction of Providence, both as being the most noble, and capable of Effects of much greater Consequence, than mere Matter; but governed by Rules and Laws more properly adapted to free Agents. In fine, it is sufficient against the Deists, that the first universal Cause should have taken such Measures, that no Effect whatsoever can happen without his Permission. It is presumed the Reader knows, that by the first universal Cause, we mean God; by second Causes, created Causes.

GOD Almighty's Works, without doubt, do not want mending, or even watching over them, as if any Disorder, or Effect, could happen anew, and unforeseen by him; because they were produced by the Direction of infinite Knowledge: But, if they were to be left to themselves, not only without a continual Preservation in their Beings and Operations, but even without a stable and permanent Order in them, we know not what might be the Consequence, or what Chance might do.

As to the last Part of the Objection, *i. e.* That it were Blasphemy to say, that God directs human Affairs after the Rate we see Matters go on in the World; meaning the Sins and Disorders of Men: It is answered, that it cannot be said without

Blasphemy, That God directs Men to Sin, or even concurs to Sin, as such: But, as nothing can happen without his Permission, otherwise he might be controuled in his Power, it is evident he may direct them, so as to draw Good out of Evil; and take such Measures, as may fully answer his all-just Designs in every Event. God must likewise be said to direct human Affairs, in this Sense, *viz.* by laying before Men the eternal Obligations of Good and Evil, and the indispensable Laws of Morality; by which, if human Affairs were always directed, nothing could happen amiss.

If they ask, What Good can be drawn from the Wickedness of the World? It may be answered, *first*, That when the Deists can comprehend all the Ends of infinite Wisdom, such a Question might have some Appearance of Reason: But if it be evident, that all the Wit of Man cannot comprehend one Attribute of God, it may be looked upon, as very impertinent. They might as well ask, Why did God make us free, rational Agents, instead of no Beings at all; or, why he did not make us infinitely perfect, incapable of Sin, &c. For the one, in Effect, is as impertinent as the other. *2dly*, Such a Question is against certain Matter of Fact; for
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it is undoubted, that there are great *Evils* in the World, allowed by Free-thinkers as such, *viz.* Death, Sickneſſes, and other Miſeries, permitted by God, on an innocent World too, according to their System. Shall we ask, why a merciful God permits ſuch Evils? To be ſure he does not permit them without juſt Ends, any more than the other; though they may be unknown to us. However, it is Matter of Fact, there are ſuch Evils; Will the De- iſts, therefore, allow that he muſt be ignorant, malevolent, or impotent in permitting them, that is, no God at all? It is, therefore, one of the moſt extravagant Ways of arguing, to ſay, that becauſe we do not know, nor can aſſign for what End a Thing is done, therefore there is no End and Deſign in it all; particularly, when the Fact is demonſtrable. We do not know, what Uſe or End God had in creating ſo many Stars in the Firmament, ſome of them ſcarce perceptible to our Eyes; therefore he had no End in creating them. Since then, it is Matter of Fact, that there are innumerable natural Evils in the World, permitted by an all-juſt God, and demonſtrable, there are moral ones likewiſe; neither does the one ſeem more repugnant to the Nature of God, than the other; let it

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suffice at present, that God has a Design in permitting them; and that they do not happen by Necessity, or Chance: And, in fine, that this Design can be no other than Good.

NEITHER is this to have Recourse to Revelation: Why so? because it is demonstrable by Reason against the Atheists, and by their own Concessions against the Deists, that there is a God. Now, if it be likewise demonstrable, that this visible World was neither made, nor is continued and preserved by mere Chance; if it be evident, that the universal Cause, the most perfect of all Beings, can neither be ignorant, impotent, or malevolent; but that all his Works must be done, as they indeed convince us, with perfect Knowledge, Wisdom, Counsel, and Design: If it be incontestable, that the free Actions of Men bear a great Share in this Work, and by Consequence, are to be directed by the same universal Cause; it is also clear without Revelation, that though we may not comprehend the Designs of infinite Wisdom, there can be nothing, but what is perfectly agreeable to it; not that the Sins of Men, as such, have any Good in them, being undoubtedly great Evils; nor that to commit Sin, is to concur with the Designs
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of God; nor, in fine, can the Permission of Evil be accounted Good, with respect to the Term and Object of it, but rather, as a Punishment for the perverse Will of Man, who chuses Evil instead of Good. However, to shew our Unbelievers, that we are not left by God, without some Light and Knowledge of his holy Ends and Designs, it may be answered,

3^{dly}, THAT the Permission of Evil, as it must have Ends and Designs agreeable to the most perfect Wisdom and Justice of God, so it contains a great many useful Considerations, with respect to Men; as, *first*, beside the Idea it gives us of his infinite Wisdom and Power in turning such Evils to some good End, as he certainly can do; beside this, it imprints in us a wholesome Terror of his Justice, and a holy Veneration for his infinite Sanctity, to which the least Evil of his Creatures must be repugnant, being much more contrary to right Reason in God, than it is to ours; it magnifies his Mercy, in being ready to pardon the greatest Crimes, on the Condition of a sincere Repentance; it keeps us in an humble Dependence, lest relying on our own Strength, capable, by woful Experience, of such Deficiencies, we fall into greater Evils, by receding still further from
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the Author of all Good: And since we are in a State of Trial and Probation, as being his subject Creatures, and the Work of his Hands, it is but fit and reasonable we should be voluntarily, as we are in Effect, dependent on him; receiving so many Benefits from his Bounty; encouraged by yet greater Hopes, I mean, everlasting Happiness in the next Life, which, of ourselves alone, we can never obtain. In this View, the Faults of ourselves, and others, are a perpetual Warning to us to stand upon our Guard; their good Deeds are an Example; the Oppressions of the Wicked exercise our Patience; their Conversion is the Subject of our Prayers, and Cause of our Joy. The great St. *Augustin*, who was a Man of Learning, Wit, and Sense, as well as a Saint, says, that the Wicked are permitted to live, either in Hopes of their Conversion, or that the Good may be improved in Patience by their Wickedness: In *Psalms* liv. *Omnis Malus, aut ideo vivit ut corrigatur, aut ideo vivit, ut per eum Bonus exerceatur*. In short, the Evils of this Life may be made the Occasion of practising the greatest Virtues; as Humility, Patience, Meekness, Resignation, Diffidence in ourselves, and Confidence in God; fixing our only Hopes on him, as
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our Supreme Good: From whence it appears, that the Permission of Evil is not so extreme hard to account for, as the Free-thinkers would have us believe. On the contrary, since Man was made essentially free, and would abuse his Liberty by Sin, it is certain, God may permit the Wickedness of Man for some Time. Perhaps Monsieur *Bayle* would say here, That God might have hindered Sin, by giving Man invincible Grace; but would that Grace destroy Liberty, or leave it intire; if it would destroy free Will, it alters the State of the Question, and is actually against Matter of Fact, that the Will of Man is free; if it leaves free Will intire, Man may still abuse it in this mortal State; which, if he chuses, God is not obliged to hinder, and break in upon his free Will.

NEITHER is the Permission of Evil the first Cause of it, or any Cause at all: *First*, Because God is incapable of all Evil, otherwise he would not be God; therefore he can no Way be the Cause of Evil. *2dly*, Because Man is capable of Evil, and must be the only Cause of it, as that Being alone, which is capable of sinning. God indeed is the first Cause of Good, but Man the first, and only Cause of Evil, by the Abuse of his free Will; abstracting here from Spirits:

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rits: But then, as God is the universal Cause and Governor of the World, he is to have a providential Eye over all that passes in his Empire; foreseeing and providing against all Events; nor has he left them without Lights and Laws to direct them, as well as Rewards to encourage them in Good, and Punishments to deter them from Evil.

A THIRD Objection against Providence is, what wicked Persons generally insist on, and is taken from the vast Inequality of the Goods and Evils of this Life; with the prosperous Success the Wicked seem to enjoy above the innocent Part of the World; and may be stated thus: “ How can we
 “ believe, say they, that there is any such
 “ Thing as Providence over worldly Affairs, when we see every where Wickedness and Violence triumphant, and
 “ Innocence and Virtue generally oppressed? What is it that governs the World,
 “ but Interest, Power, and Force? What
 “ are all the Revolutions of States and
 “ Kingdoms, but mere Effects of human
 “ Policy? How often have the greatest
 “ Marks of Providence attended the Wicked, when the most just and equitable
 “ Undertakings seemed to be quite out of
 “ its Care? Have not the greatest Tyrants
 “ overflowed with Blessings, and the best
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“ of Men seemed to be abandoned by
 “ Heaven itself? In a Word, is not the
 “ Generality of the World over-run with
 “ Enormities, that cry to Heaven for Ven-
 “ geance, and their Voice is not heard?
 “ Do not Atheists and Libertins often glo-
 “ ry in their Impieties, and bid publick
 “ Defiance to Omnipotence, daring it to
 “ its Face to vindicate its own Cause, and
 “ yet remain untouched? Why does not
 “ Providence shew itself in so just a Cause?
 “ Why does not the Divine Justice thun-
 “ der down its Vengeance on the Heads of
 “ such Wretches, and evidently convince
 “ us, that it takes Care of the World?”

ANSWER. 1st, Persons who are so weak
 as to be moved with this Argument, must
 run upon two Extreame; for according to
 this Objection, either God must destroy
 the Wicked upon the Spot, or else there is
 no Providence: But surely there may be a
 Way to reconcile Providence, allowing the
 Prosperity of the Wicked in this World,
 without falling into such Extreame: And
 who are we, that mark out Ways and
 Means for infinite Wisdom? May there
 not be other Methods in the Treasures of
 the most High, to redress these Misfor-
 tunes, without destroying the World im-
 mediately? May not his Goodness and
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Mercy consist with his Justice, till the Abuse of Mercy vindicate his Justice, and magnify his Providence? He is merciful and good, it is true, and patient too, our modern Libertins being an Example: But then, he is eternal, and by Consequence, the Times and Moments for rendering Justice can never slip from him. May not the Law of Nature, which they might find as a perpetual Check upon them, till their Passions had overpowered it; may not the Light of Reason, if they durst look at it, convince them, that such enormities were not to be committed? May not the positive Commands of God, may not Forewarnings of his Displeasure, may not Signs and Tokens of what they must expect for their Crimes, be sufficient to excuse his Providence for some Time, till his infinite Wisdom thinks fit to vindicate its own Cause? Certainly it may; and therefore such an Objection can prove nothing against Providence, unless with the Weak and Unthinking, till it proves, that God has no other Way to justify his Designs, but what we poor Mortals prescribe.

2dly, ONE might ask such Unbelievers, What Signs and Wonders would convince them of the Truth of a Providence, if evident Reason will not? Suppose a Town
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or Nation were to be destroyed by Fire from Heaven, for their Impieties, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* were: Or, Suppose it were real Matter of Fact, as the Scripture, and the Remains of the most antient Histories assure us, that all the World was drowned for their Crimes^b; it is to be feared, some Men would go on still in the common Road, and stand Proof against the most evident Signs. One may add, that notorious Crimes very often meet with their Punishment, in this Life, as well as the next; nay, Sin is generally a signal Punishment of itself; and the very Passions of Men, who seem to be most happy, are very often a severe Scourge on themselves, as a very little Reflexion might convince us of. Sometimes the Prosperity of the Wicked is one of the most dreadful Judgments upon them, and shews, that they have *received their Reward*: For as the best of Men have some Faults, which are punished in this World, that they may be rewarded eternally for their more conspicuous good Actions; so there are none so wicked, but who may have some Good in them, which will not lose its Reward with a just God: And since it will not receive it in the next Life, by reason of their
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^b See the Preface.

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more prevailing Wickedness, they will have it in this, as best suiting their Inclinations, having set their whole Hearts and Hopes here.

LASTLY, The Force of the foregoing Objection is quite of a different Tendency, from what our modern Libertins are willing to hear, and evinces the Existence of a *future State*; when God's Providence will be entirely cleared in the Eyes of Men, as well as in itself; and the Divine Justice render to every one according to their Works. This Prospect of a future State may be as disagreeable to Free-thinkers, as the Thoughts of an all-seeing Providence; though it ought to be one of the greatest Comforts to the Good: But such a State being a Point of no less Importance than the other, it shall be treated in a separate Article; but as evidently following from the foregoing Truths. It were to be wished, the Adversaries of Religion would seriously consider the Consequences of such a future State; neither let them be afraid of the Prospect of a better Lot, than dying like Brutes, and ending in Nothing, after a miserable Life of Vanity and Folly.

S E C T I O N V.

That there must be a Future State after this Life; and by Consequence, the Soul of Man is Immortal.

§. I.

THE first Part of this Proposition follows directly from the Certainty of Rewards and Punishments for the Goods and Evils of this Life: For as it is certain, that there must be an all-just Providence, introducing a perfect Equality and Compensation for the unequal Distribution of Happiness and Misery, so evidently apparent in this mortal State, chiefly occasioned by the Violences and Oppressions of wicked Men, generally prevailing over the Virtuous; it is no less certain, that this Compensation is not always made here; by Consequence, it must be in another State, *i. e.* a future State, where the Hardships and Miseries of this Life, suffer'd for Virtue's Sake, shall be amply recompenced by an all-just God, and equal Father of all. In Reality,

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one would wonder what Sort of Notions, Persons who deny this, must have of God, if they sincerely believe any, when we consider the afflicted State of this mortal Life, wherein Millions of innocent Persons, from the first to the last Gasp of vital Air, are overwhelmed with the most horrid Oppressions; and that too, oftentimes for Justice Sake: When we consider, that the World would be nothing else, but a miserable, transient Series of short-liv'd Mortals, perpetually rising, and sinking again into Nothing, or at the best, into senseless Matter, as it must be, if there is no future State; whose Life is but a Vapour, yet oppressed with innumerable Calamities, without Hopes or Redress for their Injuries; without any Recompence for their Labours: In this Supposition, in this hard and unequal State of Mortals, conscious of better Hopes, capable of better Things, what Idea, I say, can the Adversaries of Religion have of God, if he has reserved no other State, to shew forth the Treasures of his Goodness to those that love him, and keep his Commandments; distinguishing his faithful Servants from the rebellious Violators of his sacred Laws? This were in earnest to make God ignorant, or impotent; Epithets, as much unbecoming God,

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as any Thing they object against the Christians.

FROM hence the second Part of the Proposition is also certain, *i. e.* That the *Soul of Man is immortal*, reserved for that future State: Because, if the Soul of Man did not subsist after Death, the Necessity of that State would not vindicate God's Justice and Providence in regard of Men. This Consequence, granting the Premises, cannot be doubted of, and the Force of it may be summed up, in short, thus: It is certain, that there is a God, by the Concessions of the Deists, and Proofs against the Atheists: That this God must be infinitely perfect, just, and equitable to all his Creatures: It is Matter of Fact, this Equality is not made in this World, therefore it must be in the next: But then, the poor innocent Sufferers would be never the better for all this, if the Soul did not subsist in that future State, the Body being incapable of enjoying any Thing after the Separation of the Soul; therefore the Soul subsists after the Body, which is sufficient in this Place. This is a moral Demonstration of the Immortality of the Soul, and abundantly answers the Christians System against all Persons, who are forced to acknowledge a God, whose Ex-

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istence at the same Time cannot be denied, without contradicting the evident Dictates of right Reason.

BUT, because the Adversaries of Religion do not care for these moral Arguments, as being too well adapted to the most moderate Capacity; but have a Mind to perplex the Cause, and involve Matters in as much Obscurity as they can: Hence they have Recourse to some dark and abstruse Difficulties concerning the Physical Entity of the Soul; some absolutely denying the Existence, or even Possibility, of an immaterial, cogitative Substance; others pretending, that they cannot frame any Idea of a Soul, what Sort of Being it is, because they can neither see, nor feel it. Though Humility, and a Diffidence in our selves, be commendable on some Occasions, it is Pity Persons endowed with Reason, can rise no higher than *stupid Matter*. On this Account, the next Paragraph shall examine the Physical Entity of the Soul, to see if it cannot be proved to be of a much more elevated Dignity, than mere Matter, let Matter be put in what Form you please.

§. II.

*The Physical Arguments for the
Immortality of the Soul.*

THE Deists ought to allow the Possibility of one immaterial, cogitative Substance in Nature; that is, they must grant, that God is such a Substance; because a material God seems to be but a wooden Sort of a Business; not but that it is evidently demonstrable, that God cannot be mere Matter; only it does not so properly belong to this Dispute. See the Arguments for the Existence of an intelligent Cause of the Universe, PART I. SECT. II. Besides, it seems inconsistent with the glorious Things the Deists pretend to publish, on some Occasions, of the great God of Heaven and Earth, to say, when they are pressed with an Argument, that he is nothing in Effect but Matter; or, at the most, but Matter and Motion, which Motion they will never prove from mere Matter, without some other distinct Cause. In the just Supposition, that God is an immaterial, cogitative Substance, one might ask, What Notion they have of God, precisely as such a Substance? Or, What

Impossibility there is, why the Soul of Man might not be an immaterial, cogitative Substance? Or, What is there more difficult to conceive in the Soul of Man, than in God, who must be such a Substance; bating the Disproportion between finite and infinite? For though God be a Substance capable of Thought and Perception, after a Manner infinitely perfect, Does it follow from thence, that Man cannot think at all? Or, that a finite, cogitative Substance is impossible? Not in the least; but rather the contrary: So that in this Supposition, there can be no Impossibility alledged against the Soul of Man *ex parte causæ*, i. e. with respect to God as the Cause of it; that we can see no Repugnancy, why God might not produce such a Substance, any more than any other Being: Neither can there be any Repugnancy *ex parte effectus*, or in the Nature of the Thing, it being much more natural to believe, that a cogitative, immaterial Substance may be produced by God, who is such a Substance himself, than a material Being so unlike to God: Neither have the Adversaries of the Immortality of the Soul ever been able to produce any real Repugnancy against it; the most they pretend to, beside some captious Difficulties about its Operations, is to shew,

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shew, or rather say, that mere Matter may be capable of Thought; which, whoever undertakes to prove, or dares believe, goes beyond all the implicit Faith in the World.

N. B. AN immaterial, cogitative Substance and a Spirit, are synonymous Terms, or we must trifle about Words. What all understand hitherto by a Spirit, is a real Being, capable of Thought, Knowledge, Science, &c. If such a Being is in Man, and cannot be Matter, it is not only possible, but actually the Soul of Man, and Matter, are different Beings.

2. BUT to advance a Step further than a mere Non-Repugnancy: Our modern Infidels are so far from being able to shew any real Contradiction, in supposing the Existence of an immaterial, cogitative Substance, that on the contrary, there is no Being in Nature, considered in itself, and in its essential Principles, can be shewn to be more *possible*, if the Expression may be allowed, than such a Substance: No, not their own *dear Matter*. Let us take Matter as such, abstracting from the Testimonies of Sense, which in Reality cannot give us any Notion of its Possibility; and if it could, the Arguments for the Existence of an immaterial Soul are fully as

conclusive, as Seeing, or Feeling. One may ask, By what Arguments they can prove even *Matter* to be possible, that will not prove a spiritual Being to be possible also? To say there is no such Thing, is begging the Question. If they prove it from the omnipotent Power of God, Is it not as hard to conceive how one Substance can be produced, as another? Cannot the Divine Nature be participated, *in infinitis modis*, infinite Manner of Ways, according to their great Patron *Spinoza*? Particularly, if we suppose God not to be Matter, as none but Atheists can deny. Again, What Principles of Conformity in its Being has a material Substance, considered as such, more than a cogitative or spiritual Substance? If they say, there is but one Substance in the World, that is directly begging the Question also. If they say, they have an Idea of Matter, but they cannot have any of a Soul; it is answered, that they can no more tell, what the Essence of Matter is, than what a Soul is; they would highly deserve of Philosophy, if they could: By Consequence, they can no more have an Idea of the Essence of one, than the other; yet both have their Essences requiring such and such Properties. We can tell, it is true, that Matter has Figure,

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gure, Solidity, Extension, &c. so we know that a Soul has Thought, Perception, Judgment, and the like; and, I believe, we know full as well, what it is to think, as what it is to be extended. If they say, that our Senses tell us, that there is such a Thing *de facto*, as Matter: It is answered, that every one knows, that something *de facto* thinks within us; and that by an interior Consciousness, much more certain than Seeing, or Hearing; since every Man knows, that he is himself, with more Certainty, than that there is any other Man. In short, the same Arguments that would prove, that God cannot produce a Soul, will prove, that God could not produce Matter; which is proving too much.

3. IN Consequence to the foregoing Considerations it may be presumed, that the *Antipsychians* will admit as real Fact, that Men do think, perceive, judge, &c. or, that there is such a Thing in Nature, as Thought; I hope any further Proof of this is not required, unless no Deist ever thought in his Life; nor will any one require it should be proved here, that Matter has really those Properties of Extension, Solidity, &c. or deny, that it is actually extended. In this Supposition, the Possibility of an immaterial Soul is opposed to
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the Possibility of Matter, *viz.* That a Being capable of Thought, is equally as possible, as a Being capable of Extension.

4. WHEN we maintain, that the Soul of Man is *immortal*, we do not mean, that God could not destroy it, when he pleased; neither do we enter into a fruitless Question, Whether any created Being, particularly a spiritual one, as the Soul of Man, and Angels, can subsist of their own Nature for all Eternity, after they are once created, without any further Preservation of the first Cause? Such a Question is nothing to our present Purpose; only this must be said against the Atheists, that if mere Matter can subsist for all Eternity, the Soul of Man, being proved to be of a much more elevated Nature, might subsist also. Wherefore,

LASTLY, The Immortality of the Soul will be sufficiently proved against all our modern Unbelievers, of what Denomination soever, if we prove these two *Points*:
1st, That *that Being* which thinks in Man, is really and essentially distinct from the Organs of the Body, or from mere Matter, and every material Part of the Body.
2dly, That the Destruction of those Organs, or the Destruction of the Body, does not necessarily infer the Destruction of
that

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that Being and Principle, which thinks in Man.

SINCE it has been shewn, *first*, That there can be no Repugnancy, either on the Part of the Cause, or the Effect, against an immaterial, cogitative Being distinct from Matter. *2dly*, That nothing can be shewn to be more *possible*, than such a distinct Being, not even Matter, which some Infidels imagine impossible to be produced at all; but say, it was of itself, and almost make a God of it: They may, indeed, make any Thing of it, as well as make it *think*. *3dly*, Since it is undeniable Fact, that there is a Being, or a Something, that thinks in Man; and a Being, or a Something, that is extended, solid, &c. as Matter, or Bodies: It only remains to prove, as to this Point, that the Being which thinks in Man, and the Being which is extended in Bodies, cannot be one and the same in their Natures, Essences, and Properties, without confounding all the Natures and Ideas of Things; which must certainly be, in case we assert the contrary; so far are the Enemies of the Immortality of the Soul from arguing according to Reason and Philosophy. For,

I. MATTER and Spirit, Body and Soul, are two of the most different, disproportionate

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proportionate Beings we know in Life; their Powers, Operations, and Effects, with the Principles of them, are as different, both in themselves, and the most just Notions we can frame of them, as any Thing we can assign in Nature. By a Soul, or a Spirit, all the World has understood hitherto a real Being, capable of thinking, willing, chusing, designing, with all the other noble Operations of a rational Being; such as Invention of Arts and Sciences, Schemes of Government, Contemplations of the Heavens, Reflexions on itself of its own Being, with innumerable other Considerations not yet discoverable in Matter, or mere Body, no, not so much as possible; and which are actually in Man: Therefore there is a real Being, or Soul in Man, quite different and distinct from Matter.

2. THE same Argument may be expressed thus: A cogitative Substance, or a real, subsistent Being, capable of *producing* Thought, if the Term may be allowed, of its own Nature, of knowing itself by an intimate Consciousness of its own Being, of judging, chusing, reflecting, &c. is, properly speaking, a Spirit, or what we mean by a spiritual Being: Such a Substance is actually in Man; therefore in the
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Composition of Man, there is a real, spiritual Being: But Matter and Spirit are as different Things as we can assign in Nature; therefore the Soul of Man is not Matter, nor Matter the Soul of Man.

3. IF we turn our Thoughts towards Matter, we may argue thus: Mere Body, or mere Matter, of its own Nature, is not capable of knowing itself, of that Self-consciousness Man has of his own Being; nor can invent Arts and Sciences; nor can be endowed with those noble Operations known to be in Man; as will be seen more at large by and by: Therefore Matter cannot be the Soul of Man, or that Being which thinks in him. And it is to confound all the Natures and Notions of Things, to imagine one can be the other; which the *Antipsychians* must maintain, or give up the Cause.

4. IF we consider the natural Properties of the Soul of Man, and the natural Properties of mere Matter, more intimately, we shall still discover a more essential Difference between them: From whence this Argument may be formed. Where there are Properties incompatible with one another, and exclusive of each other, from the same Physical Subject, there must be Essences really and physically distinct. The

Denial of this Proposition may be reduced to a Contradiction in Terms: For Instance, if Self-Consciousness, and the known Properties of Matter, are incompatible, and exclusive of each other from the same Subject; yet mere Matter might have Self-Consciousness, Thought, &c. These Properties would be incompatible, and exclusive of one another, and at the same Time compatible and consistent with each other; which is a manifest Contradiction. Thus Materiality and Immateriality can never be in God, because they are incompatible, and exclusive of each other; otherwise God might be material and immaterial at the same Time.

BUT now the Properties, Self-Consciousness, Perception, Thinking, Reasoning, Willing, Chusing, &c. and the common Properties of Matter, as Gravity, Solidity, Extension, and the like, are incompatible, and exclusive of one another, from the same Physical Subject; and *de facto* the former Properties are in Man; therefore mere Matter can never be the Cause and Principle of these Properties; and by a further Consequence, it is not mere Matter, that thinks in Man, but some other Principle distinct from it.

WHOEVER denies the Immortality of the Soul, must deny the minor Proposition;
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tion; and by Consequence, must maintain, either that no Man ever thinks at all; or, that mere Matter, a Brick-bat for Instance, (for, give it ten thousand Millions of Metamorphoses, it will be nothing in Effect, but mere Matter still) can reason, think, judge, know itself, as well as the most ingenious Atheist in the World. Now, tho' that inconceivable Paradox seems to carry its own Condemnation along with it, we will stretch it as far as it can go; it being, in Effect, the Corner-Stone on which the main Structure of all the *Antipsychians* is built.

IN the first Place, that mere Matter should be capable of knowing itself, of reasoning, arguing, judging, willing, chusing, &c. is entirely above the Stretch of our Ideas; so that no Man living can frame an Idea of Matter endowed with Thought; or, of that Being which thinks within us, cloathed with the Properties discovered in Matter, as from its own Essence and Nature, *i. e.* as essential to a spiritual Being. Turn a Lump of Matter into all the Forms and Figures in the World; spin it into the finest capillary Fibres, Nerves, Tunicks, Membranes, Films, or whatever you please of that Kind; frame out of it the most exquisite
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organized Body; give it the most delicate Joints and Springs; actuate it with the most subtle Spirits; whirl those Spirits about with the most rapid Motion; we can never conceive one Thought to arise from it, or any positive Tendency that Way. On the other hand, take that Something that thinks in Man; consider it with the most penetrating Eyes of our Understanding; view it in all its Thoughts; in that intimate Sense and Consciousness of its own Existence; you will never discover the least Property of Matter; no Conformity, Tendency, or even Possibility, how the one can be the other; but still an inexpressible Difference presents itself to us. Hence it must be a very unphilosophical Way of Reasoning, to assert Matter to be capable of Thought, without any conceivable Grounds for such a bold Assertion. Further,

How can we prove any Ideas, or Things, to be incompatible, and exclusive of one another, if Thought and Extension are not? We may as well say, a Cube is a Globe, or a Circle a Quadrangle, as that Self-Consciousness may be Extension, or Extension Self-Consciousness; or the radical Subject of the one, to be the radical Subject of the other. If any one endeavours to advance

vance such a Paradox, let him shew some Tendency and Conformity of the one to the other; let him shew any Difformity and Diversity Ideas can have with respect to one another, if Thought and Extension will not shew as great; let him give us some certain Rules to distinguish between incompatible Properties, which will not square with the present Subject.

AGAIN, Let us join, or rather endeavour to join Self-Consciousness, Perception, and Thought, to Matter, or, which comes much to the same, to Extension, the one, or the other, is immediately destroyed; for as soon as ever we have an Idea of a thinking Being, we immediately lose Sight of Matter; and do but suppose the Principle of Thought in Man to become Matter, it is straight metamorphosed into Figure and Extension, without the least Glimmering of a Thought: Therefore, Extension and Thought can never be Properties of the same Principle; for as Extension can never be Thought, nor Thought Extension; so an extended Being can never be a thinking Being, nor a thinking Being extended, which it must be, if the Soul of Man was material, since the finest Particle of Matter has its Dimensions of Depth, Length, and Breadth; of Figure, Weight, Solidity, &c. So that if the Soul of Man were an

Aggregation of the finest Particles of Matter, it might not only be divided into Halves, Quarters, &c. but measured by the Yard, or Foot, as other material Bodies are; and on the other hand, we might have a Yard, or a Pound of Thought, a Pound of Mathematicks, a Pound of Science, a Pound of Religion, &c. Such is the Consequence of this rare Philosophy! The Close of this Argument is, that to suppose that Being that thinks in Man, to be nothing in its proper Entity, but mere Matter, or Matter in its proper Entity to be capable of Thought, is one of the most unphilosophical Paradoxes, one of the most wild Notions human Wit can run into. To pass over the innumerable Absurdities of such a Supposition, which need no rhetorical Amplification to set them forth, who but Persons quite bewildered in their Passions, could let it enter into their Heads, that a Brick-bat, were it rightly metamorphosed, and heightened by Motion, might think, reason, judge, contrive, write Books, and frame Systems of no Religion, as well as themselves? Or, That a Man's Reason might be cut out by the Yard, like a Piece of Fustian? The same must be said, as to Matter's being endowed with Life, according to the late Mr. *Toland's* System, as will be seen in the Objections.

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HENCE, 5. It is visible, that it cannot be essential to Matter to think, since all Matter does not think; witness the Matter of Air, Fire, Earth, Water, &c. whether separate, as Elements, or Compounds out of them, which are nothing but Matter; as Trees, Plants, Jewels, and the like; neither can the finest Particles of Matter in Man, whether Solids or Fluids, think any more than a Brick-bat; nor did they think before they were in Man; nor whilst they are in the Composition; nor after the Machine is dissolved; yet they are still equally Matter: If Thought were essential to Matter, they might think, reason, know themselves, remember what is past, draw Conclusions for what is to come, invent Arts and Sciences, with infinite other Properties belonging to a spiritual Being, as the Soul of Man is; but since it is evident, that these cannot be essential to Matter, either in general, or in particular; either separate, or aggregated; therefore no Particles of Matter can be the Soul of Man: Therefore the Soul of Man, and Matter in any Shape, are as different and distinct Beings, as any in the Universe. In fine, a thinking Being, and an unthinking Being, are two of the most different Substances in Nature: The Soul of Man is a thinking Being, or no Man ever thought

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in his Life; Matter is an unthinking Being, or we must allow that a Brick-bat may think: To such Inconsistencies must those be reduced, who deny the Soul of Man to be a spiritual, cogitative Substance; or, would make Matter capable of Thought, which last seems to be an Evasion of some modern Adversaries of the Soul. If God should change Matter into a Soul, it would cease to be Matter; as Water changed into Fire, would cease to be Water: But Matter can never be a spiritual Substance, and remain Matter, any more than a spiritual Substance can be Matter, and remain a spiritual Substance.

THIS main Point being established, the greatest Difficulty, with respect to our modern Infidels, is taken away; because they chiefly insist, that there is but one Substance in the World diversly modified, and that too, material; or, as some would have it, Matter and Motion; or, in fine, with the most moderate, no immaterial Substance, except God: Nor is it reasonable, that any one, admitting the Principle that thinks in Man to be really and physically distinct from Matter, should quibble about the Word Substance; if they should, what is meant here by Substance, is a real, subsistent Being endowed with its own Properties;

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erties; as Matter may be called a subsistent Being, in a larger Sense, endowed with the Properties of Extension, Solidity, Weight, &c. So in Man there is a real, subsistent Being, endowed with Self-Consciousness, Thought, &c. and since these Properties can never arise from Matter, we must grant that there is in Man, a real, subsistent Being, that is not Matter. Grant this, and it will be sufficient: Only Persons must not imagine, that an *Accident*, a *Modal* or *Half-Entity*, were they intelligible in other Things, or a *No-body-knows-what*, as Mr. *Toland* seems to give us instead of a Soul, can ever be the Principle of the noble Properties we see in Man.

As to the second Part of the Controversy, viz. That the Destruction of the Body by Death, or rather, the Dissolution of the Organs, does not necessarily infer the Destruction of the Soul; it seems to follow directly from the first: Because, if the Soul of Man cannot be mere Matter, as every Part of the Body is; if in its proper *Entity*, it is a Being essentially and really distinct from all the Nerves, Sinews, Blood, Bones, animal Spirits, or whatever makes Part of a material Body; what Repugnance can there be in Nature, why this *Being*, essentially and really distinct

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from it, cannot be preserved without the Body? For if it can but be preserved by the Power of God, it were sufficient; it is certain there is all the Reason in the World, that it should be so preserved, according to the most just and natural Conceptions we can have of God, that it may receive some Compensation for the innumerable Evils suffered here without Redress; and also hereafter, if the Soul were incapable of receiving any; since what has no Being, can have no Reward.

AGAIN, What Reasons can be drawn from the Dissolution of the Organs of the Body, to infer the Destruction of that which is entirely distinct from it? I mean intrinſick Reasons, for the external are all for its Preservation; or why should the Soul perish, because the Body perishes, which is a Being of a different Nature from it, and of a Nature altogether inferior to it; less perfect by such disproportionable Degrees? Since the Principle that thinks in Man, as to the most noble Part of its Functions, that is, the free Actions of Men, not only governs the material Part, but exercises those more elevated Operations of Judgment and Empire, of which mere Matter can never be capable: Since therefore it is really distinct
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from the Body; since it is quite of a different Nature; and, indeed, superior to it, of a much more elevated Perfection, than mere Matter can attain to, to infer the necessary Destruction of the Soul, from the Dissolution of the Body, is certainly a very unphilosophical Conclusion. They might as well say, that because the Carpenter's Chissel cuts a Cylinder in two, it may cut the Idea of a Cylinder in two also. If the Soul were a mere Accident inhering in Matter, or a Modification of it, then, perhaps, it could not subsist after the Dissolution of the Body: But, beside that such Accidents and Half-Entities are generally rejected by the Learned; beside, that such an Accident would be a thousand Times more unintelligible, than an immaterial, cogitative Substance: It would be a rare Accident indeed, that could perform more than all the material World put together!

HENCE it follows, that nothing more is required for the Preservation of the Soul separately from the Body, but the Will and Power of God; one might add, provided God would not destroy it; but that is not necessary in this Controversy, the first being sufficient. However this is certain, that it has no Repugnancy in itself; it is a Being of much more elevated Per-

fection than the Body; and if the Matter of the Body subsists after its Dissolution, by much greater Reason may the Soul subsist, being so disproportionably superior to it. To say it is an Accident or modal Entity, is worse than Nonsense; the material Causes destroying the Body cannot touch it; for let the Body be torn in a thousand Pieces, we can never perceive the Soul, or that Principle of Thought within us, to be torn along with it; though it is the Soul alone that feels all the Pain; the most exquisite Organs of the Senses being incapable even of Feeling, when the Soul is departed; which will be further explained in the Objections. On the other hand, when we consider the omnipotent Power of God, it is shocking to Reason, as well as injurious to God, to maintain, that God cannot preserve the Soul without the Body, being really and essentially distinct from it; especially, since all Arguments, not only drawn from Revelation, from which we abstract at present, but from the very Nature of the Thing, shew, that supposing the general Course of Nature, it can no more perish than Matter: Now, if it can be preserved without the Body, then, *first*, there can be no Repugnance in such a cogitative Substance; nor, *secondly*, can there
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be any Thing required, but the Will of God, that it should be so preserved; then, *thirdly*, the moral Arguments drawn from God's Justice, Goodness, and Equity, with the Necessity, in that Supposition, that there should be a just and equal Compensation for the Goods and Evils of this Life, evidently not made here, render it absolutely certain, that the Soul of Man must be reserved for an immortal State.

SECTION VI.

Objections against the Immortality of the Soul.

THE most certain Principles in Nature are not exempt from the captious Objections of human Wit; especially, when it is assisted with our disorderly Affections and Passions. Hence some Persons have so low a Notion for the Dignity of the Soul of Man, that they seem very well contented, if they could deprecitate it, and persuade themselves and others, that there is nothing in Man above a finer Sort of Matter and Motion. One would leave them

them abandoned to their own groveling Notions, if they did not openly publish their Objections against the Immortality of the Soul; and by that Means, draw Persons from the Practice of Virtue, to ingulph themselves in a total Forgetfulness of the next Life; making no Distinction, I will not say between the Death of the Just and the Reprobate, but between that of a Man and a Beast: They endeavour to blind their Judgments by the following specious Objections; some drawn from the moral Attributes of God against the Existence of a future State attended with Rewards and Punishments; particularly, if we suppose the latter to be eternal: Others are drawn from some Physical Difficulties, against the Nature of an immaterial, cogitative Substance, with the Connexion, and seeming Dependence, the Soul has on the Body. Of the first Sort the chief Difficulty may be reduced to this.

OBJECTION I. How God, without the Imputation of Cruelty, or Revenge, can suffer a Soul to remain in Torments for all Eternity; since immediate Destruction by Death [which, by the By, does the Infidels Cause very little Good] would be Punishment sufficient. On the other hand, How can temporal Faults deserve eternal

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Punishments? Such Objections as these are frequently heard in the Conversation of Free-thinkers, and other Libertins.

ANSWER I. It is easy to shew the Unreasonableness, and Inconsistence of such Objections, before one gives a direct Answer to them: It runs also on a false Supposition, *viz.* That the Faults of the Reprobate are only temporal; since their Malice may last as long as the Soul lasts, and by Consequence deserve Punishment; as we shall see by and by. It is likewise against certain Matter of Fact; for God does actually suffer, and see infinite Evils and Miseries of this Life; under which poor Mortals daily groan; not to say that he might inflict them as Punishments; at least, he actually permits them: Is he to be taxed with Cruelty, Revenge, Indolence, or Impotency, for it? *i. e.* Must we deny his Existence? For a cruel, revengeful, indolent, or impotent God, is no God at all. Again, Is it fit, that those, who blaspheme and curse him to the last, and those, who love him with their whole Hearts, should be put on the same Footing? If not, Would not such distinguishing Marks of his Favour, or Displeasure, be a Reward, or Punishment? Yet I presume there would be neither Cruelty, nor
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Revenge in it; but rather a due Distribution of Justice. Further, if eternal Punishment would be Cruelty, or Revenge, would not temporal Punishment, or Destruction by Death, in its due Proportion, be the same? If so; that Distinction is entirely frivolous; only we might say, he is not quite so cruel. It is plain, therefore, that such Objections as these attack the very Godhead, and are to be solved by all who believe his Existence.

BUT, since these Gentlemen are so often on the *How*, we are sure there are a great many Points absolutely certain, about which, when we come to be too inquisitive, as to the *How*, and the *Which Way*, we shall find ourselves very much in the Dark. To say nothing of the Incomprehensibility of the Nature of God; of Eternity itself; of the Production of the World, &c. but to confine ourselves to their own dear Matter, we shall find a great many Difficulties belonging to it; which will be extream difficult to account for: As, in what consists Extension, Solidity, Gravity, Cohesion of Parts, infinite Divisibility, or a finite Indivisibility of the same Parts, one of which it must have; yet we are quite gravelled, when we come to the Manner *How*, or *which Way*; nor
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can we well tell how they can be at all, as to the Manner how they exist, or are composed. So, if we should ask the Adversaries of Immortality, *How far* Satisfaction is due to infinite Justice and Sanctity, abused and blasphemed by wicked Men; it is very likely they would be mute on the Matter: We must not, therefore, tax God with Cruelty, or Revenge, and make no God at all of him, although he should punish Men for their Crimes, till we know, what Satisfaction is due to infinite Justice, offended by the Creatures wilful, and unrepented of Malice.

2. As temporal Crimes deserve temporal Punishments, so, if the Fault lasts for all Eternity, the Punishment may continue so too. Suppose, therefore, the Creature dying in an entire Aversion from God; hardened in its Malice; embracing its darling Sins to the last Gasps; and so is left to enjoy itself, and what it has chose preferable to God for all Eternity: Will not that unrepented of, malicious Disposition deserve a Punishment, as long as it lasts? Now it is to be feared, the Case will be thus with all those, who breathe their last in Hatred and Aversion from their God. Add to this, that when Good and Evil, Life and Death, were placed before the Eyes of the Wicked,

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to make Choice of which they pleased, they wilfully would chuse, what they knew would be the Cause of their Damnation: By Consequence, let the Punishment be what it will, as long as they were timely forewarned of it, and had the Prospect of both before their Eyes; it must be their own Fault, whatever they suffer. Might it not also be answered, ^a That those reprobate Souls, dying fixed in an immortal Hatred against God, would not thank him for their Release, or even accept of it at his Hands? Such horrid Dispositions may be comparatively seen in this Life; where Mens Hatred to one another has been so consummate, that they would not be delivered from a Rack by the Hand of their Enemy. It is a deplorable Thing, that rational Beings should be capable of such Hatred in regard of the supreme Author of all Good: But it is as deplorable Matter of Fact, that Thousands of Persons, rather Monsters than Men, not only condemn him in his most holy Laws, but curse and blaspheme him to the last, which malicious Will remaining with them for all Eternity, it is not so properly the Punishment

^a This Answer is not the Author's own Sentiment; but that of a very learned Man deceased; for whose great Knowledge in Theology, the Author had a vast Defe-
rence.

ment of a temporal Fault, as it is the Punishment of a Fault begun in Time, but lasting for all Eternity.

LASTLY, Since Man is born capable of Happiness, and that too, without End; since we have all a natural and inbred Desire of it; since in View of that everlasting Immortality, we bear patiently the Hardships and Miseries of this short and transient Life; since we are sensible we have no compleat Happiness here; since the only secure Hopes of a Redress for all our Misfortunes are in the next Life; How can it suit with infinite Goodness, to cast us down from all our Hopes, unless for our wilful Faults; or, to create us for nothing but Misery, as this short-liv'd World is, in some Manner, to the best of Men? So that, take it which Way you will, the foregoing Objection can never invalidate the Existence of a future State.

OBJECTION II, Is drawn from that seeming Dependence, and close Connexion, the Soul and Body have with one another; from whence the Adversaries of Immortality form this Argument: If, say they, the Soul were a Being distinct from, and independent of all Matter, it might certainly exercise its Functions, independent of the Brain, Spirits, Muscles, Nerves, &c. which
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are all material: But it is Matter of Fact, that we cannot have one Thought without the Organs of the Brain and Body; nay, let the most ingenious Man in the World only be seized with a Frenzy, or Fever, and we see immediately all his Reason is lost, his bright Thoughts are all vanished; but on the Dissolution of the Machine by Death, the whole System of his Operations cease in a Trice; add, that Brutes and Men struggle with Death, and breathe their last in the same Manner; therefore Man has nothing in him distinct from Matter; or at least, nothing but what is dependent of it. They might have added, with the first Inference; therefore, the most ingenious Atheist in the World is no more, as to his real Being, than a Brickbat, or a Log of Wood.

ANSWER. That this common Objection can have no Weight, but with Persons, who run away with first Appearances, and will prefer some intricate Difficulties, before the most solid Reasons to the contrary; as is the Case in this Objection; since it is as plain, that the Soul of Man is a Being really distinct from all Matter, as that there is such a Thing as Matter at all. How do we know that there are any Bodies round about us? Why, by the Relation

lation of our Senses; which Senses, it is certain, may be affected by other Causes in the very same Manner, as they are by Bodies. For Example, If God, by his immediate Power, made the same Impression on my Eyes, as the Sun does, I should think I saw the Sun, as much as I do, when I look at it at Mid-day. How do we know that we have a cogitative Being within us? Why, by an intimate Sense and Consciousness, which no Cause can deceive: Since I can never think I am, when I am not; but I may think I see, feel, &c. when I do not. But let what will happen, or whatever Cause works upon me, I am still conscious to myself, that I am Something, and know and perceive some Cause to work upon me, which I am sure Matter cannot. But put the Case our Senses were certain Guides, What is it we know of Matter? Why, nothing but its Properties, Extension, Solidity, Gravity, Aptitude to be moved locally, and the like: But what is that Something, which exacts those Properties, we are very much in the Dark; or, what those Properties are in themselves; how they are effected, and the like; which no System ever explained yet, without meeting with insuperable Difficulties: So that when we come to examine them in their

primary Causes, we shall find the Properties of the Soul to be fully as intelligible, as Matter, and the Properties of it.

BUT to answer more directly to the Grounds of the Objection; particularly, as to the Dependence the Soul seems to have on the Organs of the Body, in its Operations, in this mortal State; for that is the main Stress of the Difficulty: This is certain, that our Adversaries can never conclude, that the Soul is nothing else but those Organs set in Motion, which they must prove, if they have a Mind to prove any Thing; but this they can never prove: Why so? Because, besides the Proofs for the Soul's being distinct from the Body, there must be Something, that perceives, thinks, and operates, by the Means of those Organs; for the most volatile Spirits in the World will never know that they are Spirits; the finest Fibres will never know they are Fibres, no more than a fine Piece of Clock-work can know that it is a Clock; and so of every Thing, that is mere Matter, as the Organs are. Therefore, at the most, the Body, with all that is contained in it, is but the *Instrument*, with which such Operations are performed in this mortal State; where the Soul is united to the Body for such Uses, as it cannot perform

without it. So that although the Soul be affected by the Sufferings of the Body, as long as it is united to it; yet that Body can never feel any of those Sufferings, so as to know it suffers, without some distinct Principle capable of Knowledge: Therefore, there is a Principle in Man distinct from the Body, and every Part of it. Now it is evident, this distinct Principle may be preserved after the Dissolution of the Body, as has been proved abundantly; and the most natural Arguments shew, that it is necessary it should be so preserved: By Consequence, this Objection can have no Influence on any one, who has any competent Knowledge in Philosophy, or even good common Sense. In short, though the Body should be necessary for all bodily Operations, it is no more the governing Part, than a musical Instrument is to the Man that plays a Tune on it.

BUT to turn the Tables a little, and to consider the *much greater Dependence* the Body has on the Soul, than the Soul on the Body: Does not the Body seem more to depend on the Soul, for the most noble Part of all our Operations, *viz.* our free Actions, Knowledge, Science, and all others, which do not immediately depend on the vital Part. What a glorious Piece

of Corruption a Man's Body is, when the Soul has left it! How come all those vast Designs, mighty Projects, sublime Thoughts, to be all destroyed by the single Thrust of a Rapier, or a paltry Fever? Why, but because the sole Principle of those noble Functions ceases to have any more Communication with the Body, when the Union is destroyed? yet, I suppose, the Sword does not cut the Thread of all a Man's Thoughts, as it did the Thread of Life. Nay, it often happens, when the Machine is going to be dissolved, the Soul has more elevated Thoughts, at least more rational ones, than it had before. Thus, though the Agony and Struggles of Death are chiefly caused by the Convulsions of the dissolving Machine; yet, when Death comes on by Degrees, some Persons have their Reason most perfect and clear, to the last Breath: Is the dying Body the Cause of that too? As for our struggling with Death, as other Animals do; if we have an animal Part, must not the Convulsions be the same from the same Causes? If Free-thinkers will own no Difference between themselves and Animals, who can help it? I am sure there is a Being in Man, by vast Degrees superior to all other Beings in this lower Creation, but particularly

cularly above every Thing, that is mere Body.

OBJECTION III. We cannot conceive, how a spiritual Substance can operate on a material one; or, how Matter can affect and operate on a spiritual one; neither can we tell, how that Union is effected; or, in what it consists: Therefore there is no spiritual Being in Man; and by Consequence, no Soul, as the Christians understand it.

ANSWER. It were to be wished, Persons would but consider a little, what a wretched Argument this is, before they draw Conclusions against the Soul from such Heads. In order to make them understand the Fallacy of it, we will put one or two in the same Form. As thus: We cannot conceive how Matter can produce one Thought; therefore no Atheist ever thought in his Life. We cannot tell how Matter can perform the Operations we see in Man; what Parts it must have to do it; how the Cohesion of its Parts are effected; or, in what the Union of its Parts consists: Therefore there is no such Thing as Matter, and no Union in its Parts. All such Arguments, *ab ignoto*, drawn from our Ignorance, are the most fallacious in the World; especially, where Effects are evident; our Ignorance of the Causes of

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them, can prove nothing against Matter of Fact. Some People doubt,

*If Sight Emission or Reception be,
Must we infer from thence, we cannot see?*

DRYDEN.

It is Matter of Fact, there is a strict Union between the solid Parts of Matter; and yet the Philosophers could never rightly account for such a Union. Gold may be melted, and fused to a very great Degree of Fluidity, yet it comes to its former Consistence again, when it is cold. Some Systems about this Solidity and Cohesion of Parts, are not only absurd, but even ridiculous. Suppose, therefore, it were admitted, that we cannot account for the Manner how the Soul and Body are united, and act upon each other, What can this prove against the Immortality of the Soul? The Reasons and Proofs for it do demonstrate there is such a Being in Man, distinct from the Body; and that the Dissolution of the one does not infer the other: If so, it is Matter of Fact, there is such a Union, and that they mutually do affect each other in this mortal State: But, whether this is by an intimate Presence of the Soul in the Body; or, whether it consists in a reciprocal Action upon each other,
meaning

meaning by Action in Matter, an externally caused one; or whether, more probably, by a Law instituted by the Supreme Creator between both, is not necessary to define. As to a spiritual Substance acting upon a material one, it is not a thousandth Part so hard to conceive, as how Matter can think: A Being so much superior may have certainly superior Operations. God is a pure Spirit, yet he can cause Motion in material Bodies: Why other Spirits should not have a Power of moving, or acting upon Bodies in some Degree, no Repugnancy can be shewn; which is sufficient in this Place. I am sure, Matter of itself can have no Perception, nor, properly speaking, any Activity; as will be seen in the next Objection.

OBJECTION IV. Some People would make an Objection against the Soul's being a cogitative Substance, from an extravagant Notion of the late Mr. *Toland*, who asserts, first, That Matter of its own Nature may have a certain Tendency to Motion; but suppose so, who told him, that a material Motion, or a Tendency to Motion, can be the Soul of Man? That a material Motion can know itself, write Systems, &c? Again, what is that Tendency, or in what does it consist? For it

seems to be a very equivocal Expression. The only Tendency we could yet see in Matter, is a Tendency to *Rest*, not to Motion. Experience tells us, there is a Sort of a *Vis Inertiæ*, as a certain great Man expresses it, which does not seem to be very active; but, be that as it will, if by a Tendency to Motion Mr. *Toland* means a Capacity or Aptitude to be moved locally, such a Tendency is admitted, and no other; neither is it conceivably possible there should be any other in mere Matter.

THE same Gentleman would insinuate, that Matter being fitly organized, God may inspire Thought into it; but what Sort of Thought? A mere Quality, or a thinking Substance? The first is really beyond Imagination, the second comes much to the same, as a thinking Soul; neither could Matter ever think by that Thought inspired into it, unless it were metamorphosed into a new Something, and cease to be Matter. But, says he, why may there not be a Sort of an *Afflatus*, or vital Air breathed into Matter; which seems to be the Sense of the Scripture, *Gen. ii. 7. He breathed in his Nostrils the Breath of Life?*

ANSWER. As for the Scripture, if the Difficulty lay there, it might easily be proved from other Places and Reasons, that it means

means a Life-giving Soul: But for Mr. Toland's *Afflatus*, though punning is not so proper in such a serious Subject, it is a mere Blast. What! an Accident, a mere Quality, to be the Origin and Principle of all the noble Operations we see in Man! Or what can it be else? unless he means a real thinking Being united to Matter, which will be a Soul; or something that is mere Matter still, which brings us just where we were. His *Afflatus*, then, must be one of these three, a thinking Quality, a thinking Substance, or a thinking Matter. The first is ridiculous, the second destroys his System, the third is impossible. In short, such an *Afflatus* is ten thousand Times harder to conceive, than an immaterial cogitative Substance.

WELL, but may it not be said, That God alone thinks within us, [not all our Infidels Thoughts I am sure] and communicates to Matter a Participation of his Power of Thinking: And why, say they, cannot God make a perfectly organized Body to think or perceive as we do? To these and all other Whims of the like Nature, it may be answered, in short, that God may do more than we know of; though it is to be feared some of our Infidels Thoughts proceed from another Agent.

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gent. It is certain, a mere Machine, let it be organized as perfectly as they please, will never produce one real Thought, as proceeding from its own Nature, unless we change all our Ideas.

It is worth our Observation, that the System which would make God alone to think within us, evidently shews the Weakness of that Way of arguing against the Soul; since the Abettors of it are forced to have Recourse to a thinking Substance, distinct from the organized Body. On the Whole, if any one can persuade himself out of his own Being, or that it is not *himself* that thinks within him, but some external Cause, let him do it, if he thinks proper. As we ought not to be so proud, as to make ourselves God; so we ought not to have such despicable Notions of our Soul, as to acknowledge it to be nothing but a mere Quality, or mere Matter.

LASTLY, If any one should object, that the Souls of Brutes are distinct from Matter; yet they do not subsist after the Dissolution of the Body: So, though the Soul of Man should be a Being distinct from Matter, it does not follow, that it subsists after Death:

ANSWER. It does not belong to this Question, whether the Souls of Brutes are distinct

distinct from Matter, or not; if they are, as is more probable, by a stronger Reason the Soul of Man is; if they are Machines, governed and actuated by a particular Law of God; or, if God should create a Machine performing, in Appearance, all the Operations seen in other Men; such a Machine would not be conscious to itself of its own Being, as I presume every Man is; which Consciousness, and inward Perception, can never arise out of Matter: By Consequence, it is arguing from a mere Possibility, what God might do, against real Fact, what he has done. Neither does it belong to this Question, whether the Souls of Brutes subsist after Death, or not; if they do, by much more Reason the Soul of Man must; if they do not, as it may be very safely supposed they do not, but should be imperfect, perishable Entities, That can never infer the Soul of Man must be so too; so much superior to them in so many Considerations, beside the moral Arguments for its Preservation. Notwithstanding that exquisite Sense, and Instinct appearing in some Animals, it is demonstrable, if it were needful, that they have not that Principle of Reason we see in Man; let them have what imperfect Sort of Reflexion you please in *Particulars*,
On

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On the whole, it is plain, the Soul of Man is as much superior to Brutes, in the vast Extent of its spiritual Operations, as the Souls of Brutes are superior to Matter; whether they may, or may not be preserved by God's absolute Power, can be of no Service to our Adversaries, till they can shew, that God has created Brutes to be happy with him for all Eternity; if they cannot subsist after Death, it is no more an Argument, that the Soul of Man cannot, than it is, because a Horse cannot frame Systems against Religion, therefore a Free-thinker cannot. In short, if modern Libertins can find nothing in themselves superior to Brute Beasts, let them glory in the Similitude.

C O R O L L A R Y

Of the foregoing Doctrine: That there will be a General Judgment.

THERE is no Need of spending much Time in proving this ^a Corollary,

^a N. B. If the late Discoveries in Philosophy are true, this World will naturally have its final Dissolution. The Projectile

lary, and that too as discoverable by Natural Reason; since, if the foregoing Truths are undeniable; this last will admit of very little Dispute: For, since it is evident, that there are a great many Evils in the World, both moral and physical; since the whole Earth is, in a Manner, polluted with the most horrid Abominations, and oppressed with the most crying Injustices; since the vast Inequality of the Goods and Evils of this Life, challenges, if one may say so, the Justice of God for a Redress, and a suitable Compensation for the Miseries undergone in this mortal State; since there must be an all-equal Providence rewarding Good, and punishing Evil; yet it is Fact, this Distribution of Rewards and Punishments is not always made in this Life; since the Rules of Justice require, that the Guilty and the Innocent should not be put on an equal Footing, but the Deserts, Delinquencies, and Injuries, should have a due

Exa-

Projectile Motion of the Planets being retarded by the Resistance of the Medium, let it be ever so thin, their Gravity towards the Center will draw them into lesser Orbits; and by Degrees jumble them all together; which the Scriptures express by the Stars falling from Heaven. Some of our Philosophers actually think, they find the Moon's Orbit to be of a shorter Diameter than it was; and by Consequence, it draws nigher the Earth. Not to mention the irregular Courses of the Comets, which may cause a general Conflagration, attending the general Judgment.

Examination; wherein God's Justice may be vindicated in the Face of Heaven and Earth; the Innocence of the Sufferers declared; the Injustice of the Oppressors condemned; Virtue and Piety have their Reward, and Vice and Impiety their due Punishment: This being according to the most natural Light of Reason, the most hardened Libertin must own, that nothing can be imagined more dreadful, than the Terror of that Discussion: All the Descriptions of Art and Eloquence are unable to express it, much less is there Need to have Recourse to the exaggerating Figures of Rhetorick to set it off. It is most certain, this Day of Reckoning will come; the all-containing Rolls of Time will be displayed, and all the Sins of Men will be seen in other Lights than at present. It is in vain to endeavour to elude this Truth, by saying it is an Engine of Priestcraft, since it follows from those Principles, which are as old as Nature.

THUS the fundamental Points of Christianity, as to the moral and more difficult Part, are established, before we come to it, on a Bottom, as firm and unshaken, as Nature itself; insomuch, that the System which the Deists frame to elude the Obligations of Morality, by rejecting Christianity,

anity, and thinking it sufficient to believe the Existence of God; I say, this very Belief, duly explained, leads us naturally to the Obligations of Morality. It remains now, to examine, whether they can avoid the other Part; that is, the Necessity of acting against Reason, in not believing the Divine Institution of the Christian Religion.

BEFORE I end this Part, it is a Piece of Justice to declare, that it is possible there may be some Deists really such, who do not call most of the hitherto established Truths in Question, who may endeavour sincerely to live up to the Rules of Morality; even as an Obligation incumbent on all Men: Their Numbers, I fear, are extremely thin, and it is prodigious hard to distinguish them from the rest of the Free-thinkers. Of those who do not deny the foregoing Truths, it may be said, that so far they approach to the Kingdom of God. But what a Folly is it, to sit down in the Mid-way! Particularly, since most of the remaining Difficulties against Christianity chiefly consist in speculative Points belonging to Faith: The great Burden of the Law is in the Obligations of Morality; however, they ought to observe, that these Obligations, beside their own natural Evidence,

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dence, are confirmed and enforced by all the Arguments for the Divine Institution of the Christian Religion; which, joined with their own intrinsic Weight, must render the moral Part of Christianity impregnable, and shew, that any other System must be entirely irrational. What the Proofs are, for the Divine Institution of that Religion, as to all its Parts, will be seen in the following Sections.



T H E



THE
Great DUTIES
OF
LIFE, &c.

PART III.

SECTION I.

The third and last great Point considered, viz. Whether God has not sufficiently revealed the particular Points of his LAW and WORSHIP, in the Institution of the CHRISTIAN Religion.

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§. I.

§. I.

Some previous Considerations in order to the Resolution of the Question.

1.  HE Matter of Fact concerning the Revelation of the Christian Religion, is supposed, by some People, to be the main Point in Dispute between the Christians and the Deists; though in the Bottom it is very probable, that some of the greatest Enemies of Christianity are those, that deny the sacred Truths already established. And, if one may have the Liberty of Free-thinking as well as themselves, it is *on Account* of the one, that they reject the other: An evident Proof of this, more than what has been already alledged, is, that when you begin to talk with most of those Gentlemen, who stile themselves Deists, about the Obligations of Morality, and the Rules of a good Life, they can scarce contain themselves from breaking out into the usual Expressions of "Pshaw! it is all a Jest, mere
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“ Cant and Bigotry, as if God ever troubles himself with what we do!” So that the Case seems to stand thus: They are resolved not to tie themselves up to any Obligations; and yet their Pride, for that is certainly at the Bottom of it, will not let them acknowledge, that therein they act against Reason; on which Account, that they might be entirely their own Masters in Morals, as well as in the other Parts of Religion, they reject the Obligations of Christianity, as the greatest Rub that lies in their Way. And then, to save their Reputation at the same Time, they pretend, their Reason will not let them be imposed upon with Shams instead of Truth: Neither do the Christians design to do it; but if a Person should thoroughly examine, why they would put the whole Cause upon this Issue; it is, because they think the Proofs for Christianity are not so glaringly evincing, as those for the Existence of a God; and by Consequence, they hope to find some Loop-hole or other for an Evasion; for these Gentlemen never pretend to Victory, but only, not to be quite hewed down; whereas they are in a deplorable Condition, if they have not the most evident Demonstrations on their Side.

2. HOWEVER, we will suppose at present, that the *real Dispute* between the Christians and them, is concerning the *Certainty of Revelation*; nay farther, which is a much harder Supposition, we will suppose they would be Christians even in *Practice*, as well as *Profession*, were they *convinced* that God was the Author of its Institution: But then one might ask them, What it is they require to be convinced? Surely they do not deny the *Possibility* of all Revelation; or, that God might, if he were so pleased, *reveal* and signify his Will to Men, after *what Manner*, and in *what Things* he has a Mind to be worshipped by them. Such a Denial as this would not be very honourable, not to say any more, in the Mouths of those who publish such glorious Things of the great God of Heaven and Earth. But it is certain, that such a Revelation is *possible*, and I wish the Cause depended on that Issue.

3. IN the next Place, no Man in his Senses can deny, but that such a Revelation were to be the most *wished* for by Men; for since there is an indispensable Worship due to God from all Men; since this Obligation extends itself to the Duties of human Life; since the complying with or deviating from those Obligations neces-

farily induces the Favour or Displeasure of the Supreme Lord and Judge of Life and Death; since they must be accounted for in an immortal State, attended with suitable Rewards, or Punishments; and by Consequence, must be of the greatest Importance. On the other Hand, since we find the Inclinations of Men so prone to Evil; their Appetites so depraved; their Will so obstinate and perverse; their Judgments so clouded with false Notions, and Elusions of the most natural Principles; their Passions breaking in upon the most inviolable Laws of Nature, and their Pride always furnishing them with an Excuse for what they do: When at the same Time, the living up to those Laws is so absolutely necessary, the Violation of them so common, and the Determination, I will not say of the more remote Principles, but even of the very first and Principal of the *Agenda* and *Credenda*, are so hard and difficult to be *indisputably* assigned, and that too by the Deists own Confessions; so that *no human Authority* is sufficient to set *unquestionable* Bounds to the perverse Notions and capricious Judgments of Men. What could be more desirable, or even necessary, than that the Divine Authority should, with a *Fiat Lux*, dissipate the Clouds of

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Errors surrounding us on all Sides; and, by his *unquestionable Determination*, lay before us, what we are to *believe*, and what we are to do, in order to secure our Happiness, and avoid his Displeasure? This, I am sure, and the Deists are not ignorant of it, has been the Judgment of the wisest Men in most Ages. In fine, the Deists cannot plead, either the *Impossibility*, or the least Absurdity, that there should be such a Revelation; only they might say, that they do not know where it is: But how erroneously blind they must be even in that Point, will be seen by and by.

4. Now, since it is possible for God to reveal his Mind to Men after what Manner, and in what Things he requires to be worshipped, as it is most desirable there should be such a *Revelation*: And since the Deists have a Mind to reduce the whole Dispute to Matter of Fact, one might ask them once more, Suppose God *should actually reveal* his Mind, and the particular Manner of his Worship to Men, what is it they require to be convinced of the Truth of the Fact? What Ways and Means could they desire, he should make use of, to enforce the Certainty of it? Why, say they, let him do it by such *Signs and Tokens*, as no Man in his Senses can doubt of:

of: Very well; but I am afraid this Answer will prove the Deists to be quite out of theirs; for according to them, no Signs or Tokens, nor even *Miracles*, can do it: Why so? Because, say they, we are quite in the Dark, *how far* the *Power of Nature* reaches, and by Consequence, do not know but all might be some more hidden Effect of Nature. So that, on the one Hand, they must own, that God might, by certain Signs and Tokens, reveal his Will to us; and yet on the other Hand, when it comes to the Push, they deny that any Signs and Tokens, or even Miracles, are *sufficient*; which looks very like a Contradiction. One would think raising dead Men to Life with a Word; giving Power to poor simple Men to do the like; multiplying five Loaves of Bread, (I shall examine the Facts afterwards) to feed so many thousand Persons; walking upon the Waves of the Sea; expiring in the Eyes of the World on a Cross, and afterwards coming to Life again; appearing and conversing in his real Body, palpable and visible, before Numbers of different People, at distinct Times and different Places, for forty Days together; and afterwards, as he had assured them he would do, causing the Heavens to open for his Reception before their

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Eyes; mounting up above the Clouds, in full View, accompanied with celestial Spirits, Witnesses of his Glory, &c. I say, if these are not Signs and Wonders, as much superior to *Nature*, as any the Deists can assign, I desire them to tell us, what would be superior to it: So that *admitting* the Matter of Fact, the *Disbelief* of them as such, would rather prove a Man to be out of his Senses, than the contrary.

5. AGAIN, if the above-mentioned Signs and Wonders, recorded to have been done by *Jesus Christ*, were *no Impostures*, but really and *de facto* done by him as recorded; if nothing can be objected against them, but what may be objected against any other *Proofs*, the *Deists* can bring; or even against all Possibility of God's revealing his Mind to Men, they ought to be looked upon (Circumstances afterwards considered) as entirely sufficient to convince any Man in his Senses, that *what* he did, and the Law he established, was from God, promulgated by his immediate Authority. Then, one might ask the *Deists*, *How* we shall know whether these Signs and Wonders were *really done*, or not? Why, will they say, by our common Senses, Eyes, Ears, &c. just as we could tell, were we upon the Spot, whether a Man, pretend-
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ing to do it, could carry *Paul's* Church away upon his Shoulders, or not: But then they must give me Leave to suppose too, that the Apostles, and Disciples, with so many thousand Jews, if there were any such Nation, had Eyes and Ears, as well as the *Deists*: Ay; but for those who lived a thousand Years after, how shall we know that any such Things were done? If one should ask the *Deists*, how they are sure, there was ever such a Man as *Alexander the Great*, *Julius Cæsar*, or even *Apollonius Thionæus*, they would find it prodigious hard to assign any Rules, which do not infinitely better agree with the Facts done by *Jesus Christ*, than with any other ancient Facts in the World. For, if they appeal to the then ocular Witnesses, and the Notoriety of the Thing, acknowledged by whole Nations, the Christians can produce whole Nations, as well as they; if to History, they defy them to produce any more *authentick*; if to publick Monuments, there the Christians are superior to them; if to the Impossibility of *imposing* on the whole World, it is ten Times harder to make People believe an Imposture against themselves, and against all the then established Laws of the Universe, than in a Matter that did not concern them; if to Tradition,

tion, or a successionary Belief, dated from the Moment Things were done, from Father to Son, down to us, the Christians are quite too hard for them in that Point; if to Men of Sense, Learning, Probity, Integrity, &c. they may begin the Comparison when they please. In a Word, nothing can be alledged for the Truth of past Facts, which the Christians may not much better alledge for the Truth of the Gospel Facts.

§. II.

The chief Points to be determined in this Case.

TO pass from Supposition to the real Matter in Hand: The most *material Points* the *Deists* can call in Question in the Institution of the Christian Religion, may be reduced to *these two*. *First*, Whether the Wonders, Signs, and Prodigies recorded of Jesus Christ, and his Disciples, were *really done* as recorded. *2dly*, If done as recorded, *whether* they ought not to be looked upon, by any Man in his right Senses, as evident Signs and Arguments, that the

the *Law* and *Doctrines*, in *Confirmation* of which they were done, came from God, as the Author of them declared they did, and wrought those Signs and Wonders to confirm what he said and taught.

As to the First, that there was such a Person as Jesus Christ, who called himself the Son of God, and declared openly to all the World, that he came to teach Men the Way of Truth, and reveal to them the Will of God, in the Institution of a new Religion, no *Deist*, as I have heard of, was ever yet so hardy as to deny. *2dly*, As it was very natural for Men to ask him, by what Proofs he could make it appear, that God had sent him to preach up a new and unheard-of Law, that he did pretend to work most unparallelled Wonders and Prodigies, as Raising the Dead to Life, Curing the Lame and Blind, Healing all Diseases, &c. in order to confirm his Mission, and induce Men to believe in him, is no less undeniable. *3dly*, That great Numbers did actually believe in him on Account of those Wonders and Prodigies (true or false) before and after his Death, and have continued and encreased in that Belief, from that Time without Interruption, till this Day, is also unquestionable Matter of Fact. *4thly*, As to the Nature
of

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of the Thing, that Men may be certain of some Facts done in the Eyes of all the World; for Example, That if a Man should pretend, in the Hearing of all this City, that he would carry *Paul's Church* upon his Shoulders, I suppose the Standers-by might be certain, he either did, or did not do it. *Lastly*, That it is *possible* to transmit some past Facts to Posterity, by Tradition, History, publick Monuments, and the like; so that we may be as sure of them, as if we saw them on the Spot; the Examples of this Kind may be, that there was such a Man as *Julius Cæsar*; that there was such an Action, as the Battle of *Pharsalia*; or to come nigher Home, that there was such a Man as *William the Conqueror*, and that he really did make those Changes in our Constitution, as are recorded of him. These Things being without Controversy in our present Business, the Gospel Facts will appear to be so too, in the following Sections.

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SECTION II.

§. I.

That the Gospel Facts, or the Signs and Wonders recorded of Jesus Christ, were really done as recorded.

TO prove this Proposition, we need only remind the *Deists* of what was laid down above, *viz.* That we may be *sure* of some Facts, both present and past, without any Danger of Priestcraft or Imposture whatsoever: If this cannot be denied by Men, who are no Enemies to what we are assured of by our common Senses, why then one may safely assert, that the Wonders and Prodigies recorded to have been done by Jesus Christ, were most certainly done as recorded: Why so? because all the Proofs that can ascertain to us any past Facts, concur in the Facts recorded of Jesus Christ: What are those Proofs?

FIRST, The *Nature* of the Facts themselves; which fall under the Capacity of our common Senses: Since one may suppose,

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pose, that Men who languished under the Miseries of Sickneſs, Lameneſs, Obſeſſions, and the like, could really tell, and feel, whether they were cured and relieved, or not. Perſons born blind, could really tell, whether they were reſtored to their Sight, or not; as likewiſe the Standers-by, Parents, Friends, Acquaintance, could tell whether they were really blind, or not. Five thouſand hungry Perſons at one Time, and four at another, could tell whether they had their Fill, or not; as the Apoſtles and Diſciples could tell, whether there were any more than ſo many Loaves to do it. The Maſter of the Veſſel, with his Crew, and the other Diſciples, could tell, whether they ſaw a Man walking on the Waves of the Sea before them; though it was in the Night, it is related they ſaw him, with the Circumſtances of St. *Peter's* going to him, and though ſinking at firſt, walked to him; I ſay, they could tell, whether this was all a Dream, or not; eſpecially, ſince our Bleſſed Saviour came out of thoſe very Waves into the Ship to them. Numbers of Perſons, who ſaw him expire in the moſt notorious Manner, nailed to an infamous Croſs, as a publick Malefactor; who ſaw him ſtark dead, and yet afterwards converſed with him, talked with him,

Part III. of L I F E, &c. 239

him, eat with him, remaining upon Earth forty Days together, could tell, whether these Things were real, or not. Dead Persons who were raised to Life before Numbers of Spectators, as likewise those Spectators, could tell, whether they were real Men, or Shadows. In a Word, to pass over infinite others, the same Persons, with several Hundreds assembled together, and called out by him, to see him mount up to Heaven from the Midst of them, and that at Mid-day, could tell, whether they were to believe their own Eyes, or not. So that the Nature of the Facts, with the Circumstances in which they were done, being duly considered, there is no Possibility of imagining, without the most romantick Fiction, that such Things as these could be imposed upon People in their right Senses, at least against their Will, if they had but Eyes and Ears, as Men have now; and whoever should pretend to do it, deserves to be begged for a Fool, or a Madman. This is to shew, that the Nature of the Gospel Facts being such as fall under our common Senses, and some of them more capable of making Impression on our Minds, than even Signs from Heaven, they might have been discovered, if Impostures, and could not be imposed on any rational Man's

Man's Credulity against his Will, no more than a Man could make People believe, he carried *Paul's* Church away upon his Shoulders, unless the whole City concurred with him in the Cheat.

SECONDLY, *Innumerable Witnesses* of the same Facts, who both could, and certainly would have borne Testimony against the Imposture, if it had been such. These Witnesses were not only the Apostles and Disciples, with all those Thousands who were following him, but Persons of all Sorts, Dignities, Interests, and almost Countries and Nations; nay, the greatest Part of them his mortal Enemies, whose particular Interest it was to discover the Imposture: So that not only some one or other, but even the whole *Jewish* Nation might have been Witnesses against him; Men that were perpetually prying into his Actions, to see what they could lay hold of against him; Men the most obstinate, stubborn, and hardest to be convinced, that ever were; more incredulous than the Deists, if that be not impossible; Men who looked upon themselves obliged, by all the Tyes of Religion and Interest, no slender Motives, the Deists being Judges, to destroy, as well as confute both him and his Followers, leaving nothing unmoved in Earth

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or Hell, in order to effect it; and yet, as they owned themselves, and the Fact proved it, the whole World went after him: And why so? because they believed what they saw, heard, and even felt of the Virtue and Force of the Wonders performed by him. Now, if not only a whole Cloud of Witnesses, but a whole Nation, and such a Nation too, can ascertain to us the Verity of any Fact; as it was impossible, humanly speaking, for them to be imposed upon themselves, so it was impossible for them to *conspire* to impose upon others.

THIRDLY, The *immediate Publication* of those Facts upon the Spot, in the very Time they were done; promulgated and preached up to the whole World, not as Things past, only heard of, or dubious, but as Facts undeniably performed, fresh and recent in the Eyes of every body; with Appeals to every Man's personal Knowledge of what was done, and then actually doing; so that before the *then living Generation* were extinct, there was scarce any Nation of the known World, but what had heard of them; besides infinite Numbers immediately convinced of the Truth of them; induced thereto by the irrefragable Authority and Notoriety of the Thing in itself; nothing was

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done in private, every Body was admitted to see, every one's Ears sounded with them, every one had Liberty to contradict them, and, I may say, if they were Cheats, every one might have disproved them: Neither was it a Report of a Day's standing, but a Belief founded on the most evident Facts, encreasing still, as it lasted, from the *Divine Author's* first shewing himself, till his own, and his Disciples Death, and persisting by its own unshaken Authority, till this Day.

FOURTHLY, *Immediate Histories* and Monuments recording the same Facts while they were fresh, and known to all Men; and if Histories can be preserved, the most carefully and religiously preserved of any Histories whatsoever: For I will defy all the Deists in the World to prove the *Authenticity* of any ancient History, if the Histories recording the Gospel Facts are not such. These Histories are not only the four Evangelists, the Acts of the Apostles, the several Epistles of the Apostolick Writers and Disciples, but the chief Monuments of the first and most ancient Writers of the next After-ages, *Greeks* and *Latins*, Hereticks, Schismatics, and Sectaries of those Times, who universally agree in the Sum of those Facts recorded of Jesus Christ

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Christ and his Disciples; either receiving them as such, or which is more, supposing them as unquestionable.

FOR the Reader's Satisfaction, I shall here give a summary Account of the ancient Histories and Monuments, which prove the Truth of the Gospel Facts, that is, of the Life and Death, Preaching, Doctrine, and Miracles of Jesus Christ, with the Divine Institution of the new Law, from the first Beginning of Christianity to the End of the first three Centuries; after which Time we have the Writings of the most renowned Doctors and Fathers of the Church, Decrees of Councils, &c. not only kept and preserved in the Archives of the most illustrious Churches, East and West, but confirmed by the Records of publick Affairs, and Histories of the *Greek* and *Roman* Emperors down to us; the History of Christianity interfering with the publick History, from the Time of *Constantine the Great* to these present Times. As for this last Period, that is, from *Constantine the Great's* Time, I believe no serious Free-thinker will dare to deny, that the Divine Institution of Christianity, and the Truth of the Gospel, as to the Facts recorded in it, was as much believed, and delivered down as certain, by all the Monuments of

those Times, as that there was such a Man as *Constantine the Great*, and such Churches in the World.

NOR can there be much more Difficulty from *Constantine the Great's* Time upwards, till the Death of Jesus Christ; though the Persecutions of the *Pagans* hinder us from having so many Monuments upwards, as since the publick Establishment of Christianity, yet there are sufficient Monuments remaining still, for the first three Centuries, that is, till the very Time the Facts were done, that Persons must be Scepticks in History as well as Religion, who pretend to deny the Sum of them. These Monuments are taken from, and collected by the most learned and judicious Criticks and Historians these later Ages have produced; particularly the learned and judicious *Tillemont* in his Ecclesiastical History of those Centuries, the celebrated *Fleury* and *Du Pin*, *Alexander Natalis*, &c. who all took such Care and Pains in collecting, comparing, and examining the Truth and Authenticity of them, that no History extant ever passed a stricter Scrutiny. The Reader will please to observe, that the Writings of the Fathers of the first Centuries are a Confirmation of the Gospel Facts, whether they are Apologies for Christianity,

ty, or Exhortations to the new Christians to live up to their holy Law, or Records and Acts of those that laid down their Lives for the Truth of the Gospel, or other spiritual Writings, supposing the Facts to be certain, and the like: All such Works and Monuments, provided they are genuine in their respective Views, may justly be esteemed an historical Proof of the Truth of the Facts at that Time. Of all these Kinds, the learned Writers mentioned above produce a great many authentick Remains, from the first Rise of Christianity down to us; beside the four Evangelists, and the Writings of the Apostles themselves, preserved with so much Care by the first Christians, such as no other Histories in the World ever exceeded, if equalled. Immediately after these, we have ^a,

1. ST. *Clement of Rome*; he was one of the immediate Successors of the Apostles, lived in the Apostles Time, wrote an Epistle to the *Corinthians* to exhort them to live in Peace and Unity, and imitate the Patience of Jesus Christ, in Hopes of a Resur-

R 3 rection,

^a N. B. This summary Account of the following Writers, and their Works, being examined, and proved at large by the Ecclesiastick Historians mentioned before, in their Histories of the first *three Centuries*, which are in most Libraries, there were no Need of quoting them in particular; except where some remarkable Particular is observed.

rection, &c. This Epistle of St. *Clement* is allowed to be genuine by the most learned and judicious Criticks, and is an undoubted Testimony of the Truth of the Gospel Facts, by a Person who lived and wrote immediately after the Apostles. See the Account of his Life and Writings in *Tillemont*, *Fleury*, &c. His other Works, though there may be some Reason to doubt whether they are his, are allowed to be very ancient, and confirm the same Truth.

2. THE Book of *Hermas*, intituled the *Pastor*, was in great Esteem by the Ancients, and allowed to be genuine by the same learned Criticks. He was Contemporary with the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord; it was even looked upon to be canonical by some; and though his Notions may not be so just in some Mysteries, yet it is a valuable Piece of Antiquity, and supposes the certain Belief of the Gospel in his Time, that is, when all the new Christians almost saw the Proofs of it with their own Eyes.

3. *IGNATIUS*, Martyr, allowed by all to have died for the Faith of Christ, under *Trajan* the Roman Emperor; several of whose Epistles are still extant, published by the learned *Vossius*, and allowed to be genuine by most of the Learned, both ancient

cient and modern: Was not he an authentick Witness of the Faith and Truth of the Gospel?

4. THE Epistle of St. *Barnaby*, published by the same *Vossius*, allowed to be his by the ancient Fathers, as St. *Clement Alex. Origen, Eusebius, St. Jerome, &c.* whose Quotations may be seen in the learned Authors mentioned above, and scarce questioned by any, to have been a Monument of the first Century; and though it be not received as canonical Scripture, it is a signal Remain and Testimony of Antiquity, that the Sum of the Gospel was then acknowledged to be true.

5. *PLINY*'s famous Letter to the Emperor *Trajan* is even a heathen Testimony of the Truth of the Gospel. Part of this Letter, as to what concerned the Christians at that Time, is translated by *Tillemont*, and inserted in his Ecclesiastical History, Tome II. Ar. 4. Among a great many other Things, *Pliny* acquaints the Emperor, that in his Examination of the Christians he found, that " They rose before the Sun to
" sing the Praises of Christ, as *God*, and
" obliged themselves not to commit Crimes,
" &c." These were all during the first Age of Christianity. To these one may add the Sufferings and Acts of the first

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Martyrs, such as are allowed by the best Judges of Antiquity, as *Eusebius*, St. *Jerome*, *Photius*, &c. and examined by the learned Authors quoted at the Beginning: Not to mention the Apostles Creed, and other Ordinations and Traditions of the Churches, which, if we could not fix so exactly, as to the particular Time when they began, must be allowed by all to be very ancient: Nay, the very Heresies and first Disputes about particular Points, shew the universal Belief of the Christians in the Sum of the Gospel Facts, immediately after their Promulgation.

IN the second Century, as the Numbers of Christians encreased prodigiously, so we have a great many more Remains of Antiquity, which prove the same Truth.

1. ST. *Policarp*, Bishop of *Smirna*, Disciple of St. *John the Evangelist*, who entertained St. *Ignatius*, going to his glorious Martyrdom; received a Letter from the same holy Martyr, and Brother Disciple under St. *John*; he left a Letter to the *Philippians*, in which, says *Tillemont*, he instructs them concerning the Reality of the Incarnation and Death of our Saviour; treats as Sons of Satan, all those that deny it, and do not believe the Resurrection; and *lastly*, laid down his Life for the Truth
of

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of the Gospel under *Marcus Aurelius*. Vide *Tillemont*, Tome II. Eccles. Histor. in St. *Policarp*.

2. ST. *Justin*, Philosopher and Martyr, who defended the Faith of Christ by his Writings, still extant, against the Jews and Heathens; and wrote two Apologies for the Christians, one of which had such Influence on the Emperor *Antoninus*, that he wrote to the Governors of *Asia* not to persecute the Christians; Part of which Letter is inserted by *Tillemont* in his Ecclesiastical History. Lastly, the same holy Martyr laid down his Life for the Truth of what he wrote.

3. *QUADRATUS* and *Aristides*, both of them Defenders of the Faith, and presented Apologies for the Christians to the Emperor *Adrian*: The first was a Disciple of the Apostles. There remains a Fragment of one of these Apologies, preserved by *Eusebius*, L. IV. c. 3. Hist. Eccles. in which the Author says, That one cannot doubt of the Miracles of Jesus Christ, since of the Persons who were healed and raised to Life by him, there are several who were still alive in our Time. *Du Pin*, Nov. Bib. of the second Century.

4. *TATIAN* the *Assyrian*, Disciple of St. *Justin*, who wrote an Apology for Christ.

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Christianity against the *Gentiles*, and very justly ridiculed the Religion and Rites of the Heathens. We have, says the same *Du Pin*, *ibid.* this Treatise of *Tatian* against the *Gentiles*, inserted in the *Bibliotheca P. P.* and in the End of *Justin's* Works.

5. *ATHANAGORAS*, another learned Writer in Defence of Christianity, and presented an Apology for them to the Emperor *Marcus Antoninus*; he wrote another Work of the Resurrection of the Dead. *Du Pin*, *ibid.*

6. *THEOPHILUS*, Bishop of *Antioch*, whose Book to *Autolicus* a Heathen, is still extant; he wrote also in Defence of Christianity against the *Gentiles*; in his Book to *Autolicus*, this learned Bp. proves, that the History of *Moses* is the most ancient and true History of all others.

7. *St. Denys* of *Corinth* flourished under *Marcus Antoninus*, of whom *Eusebius* says, *L. IV. c. 23.* that he made the Christians of other Countries Partakers of the Fruits of his Labours, in his Letters which he wrote to several Churches. *Du Pin*, *ib.*

8. *St. Melito*, Bishop of *Sardis*; among a great many other Works, he wrote an Apology for the Christians, presented to *Marcus Aurelius*; and was obliged, says
Tille-

Tillemont, to write for the Christians, on Occasion of some Edicts published by the Magistrates of *Asha* against them. *Tillemont*, Hist. Eccl. in *Melit*.

9. *CLAUDIUS Apollinaris*, one of the greatest Men, says the learned *Tillemont*, that governed the Church in the Reign of *Marcus Aurelius*; he addressed an Apology for the Christians to the same Emperor, which *St. Jerome* calls a renowned Work. *Eusebius* assures us, that he speaks of the miraculous Victory, which *Marcus Aurelius* gained over the *Quadi*.

10. *ST. Irenæus*, Disciple of *Policarp*, and educated among the Disciples of the Apostles; This great Man, and holy Martyr, among other Works, wrote a Treatise against the *Gentiles*; which, *Eusebius* says, was very concise and necessary, and laid down his Life in Defence of what he taught. *Du Pin*, *ibid*.

11. *ST. Clement of Alexandria* flourished under *Severus* and *Caracalla*, a Man of vast Learning, as well as Sanctity. We have, says *Du Pin*, three remaining Works of his very considerable, *viz.* his Exhortation to the *Gentiles*; his Pedagogue, and eight Books of *Stromatum*, or *Miscellanies*: The Exhortation to the *Gentiles* is a Discourse to the Heathens, to persuade them

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them to forsake their false Gods, and embrace the Religion of Jesus Christ.

12. *TERTULLIAN*, and his Writings in general, are so well known, that his Name may be sufficient. I shall only mention, that he wrote an apologetical Book in Defence of the Christian Religion, addressed to the Proconsuls of *Africa*, and the Governors of the Provinces: Among other Things he proves the Truth of our Religion by the Miracles of Jesus Christ, performed not two Ages before; by the great and extraordinary Eclipse happening at his Death, remarked in the Archives of the *Pagans*; and the miraculous Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead: Is it not evident, that he not only believed them himself, but must know, that they were judged and recorded to be true, from the Time of their being performed down to his own Time? In the third Century occurs,

1. *JULIUS Africanus*, a Philosopher, Historian, and Chronologer; he composed a Chronicon, much esteemed by the Learned, in which he puts down the most memorable Things from the Beginning of the World to the Coming of Jesus Christ, and from the Time of Christ to his own: As he flourished not much above two hundred Years after Christ, his History is a very strong

strong Confirmation of the History of the Gospel.

2. *MINUTIUS Felix*, another Scholar, and Apologist for the Truth of the Christian Religion; which he does in an elegant Dialogue between a Christian and a Pagan.

3. *ORIGEN*, the Wonder of his Time, for Learning and Penetration, whose Works are so well known, that it is needless to say any more; but only to observe, that it were Madness to imagine, that so learned a Person, who spent his Life in elucidating the Scriptures, and the Christian Religion, could be ignorant of the Truth of the Gospel, especially, having so much better Opportunities than we can have now, and so near the Fountain Head.

4. THE same may be said of the great St. *Cyprian*, Bishop of *Carthage*, who not only spent his Life in writing, teaching, and following the Example of his Law-giver, but laid it down for the Law of Christ.

5. ST. *Dionysius* of *Alexandria*, of whom *Du Pin* writes thus: " He was, says he, " one of the most learned and illustrious " Prelates of his Age; who, being con- " sulted from all Parts about Matters of " Religion, wrote a great Number of Let-
" ters

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“ters to the most illustrious Bishops of
“the Church; several Works against He-
“resies; and some Treatises of Theology
“and Discipline: The remaining Part of
“his Works, which we have in *Eusebius*,
“and *Athanasius*, make us regret the Loss
“of the rest.” He gives us an Account
of the Persecutions of the Christians under
the Emperor *Decius*, and relates the Mar-
tyrdom of a great many of them. *Du*
Pin, Nov. Bib. de eodem.

6. *ARNOBIUS*, who wrote in De-
fence of the Christian Religion against the
Infidels; in this Treatise, which is yet ex-
tant, he proves the Divinity of Jesus Christ
from the Holiness of his Life, from the
Innocence and Purity of his Morals, *from*
the great Number of Miracles and Prodi-
gies which he wrought, and gave Men Pow-
er to do, from the Signs that appeared at his
Death, &c. He lived not above 250 Years
after our Saviour's Time. *Du Pin*, de eo-
dem.

7. *LACTANTIUS*, the Scholar of
Arnobius; he was called the Christian *Ci-*
cero on Account of his elegant Works;
chiefly in Defence of Christianity: Persons
need only read his Works, to judge, whe-
ther this learned Man was not convinced
of the Truth of the Gospel. It were end-

less to mention all the Writers of these Ages, or the Numbers of Persons who suffered during the Persecutions of the Heathen Emperors, we only mention the more conspicuous: All these were within three hundred Years after our Saviour's Time, beginning from those who lived with the Apostles by a continued Succession till that Time. These, and a great many more, may be seen in *Tillemont*, *Du Pin*, *Fleury*, *Alexander Natalis*, and others. When we begin the fourth Century, the Testimony of so many great Prelates who flourished in that and the following Centuries, are too well known to insist on Particulars; as *St. Athanasius*, *St. Basil the Great*, the two *St. Gregories*, *St. Chrysostom*, *St. Jerome*, *St. Augustine*, &c. But,

LASTLY, We ought not to omit the learned *Eusebius*, though he flourished some Time after the Year 300, which was no long Time after the Death of the Successors of the Apostles. *Eusebius's* Learning, Judgment, and Accuracy in the Search of Antiquity, no one, that has any Knowledge in History, can call in Question, as appears by his Works; particularly, his Books *De Præparatione & Demonstratione Evangelii*. If such a Weight of Testimonies, and Writers of different Times
and

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and Nations, agreeing in the same Truths, cannot over-bear the Scraps and Quibbles of Free-thinkers, we must say, that their Ignorance is more invincible than their Infidelity.

THERE is one particular Reflexion, naturally offers itself on the Consideration of the foregoing Testimonies: Which is this; Suppose any one should call in Question, the Coming in of *William the Conqueror*, and his establishing new Laws in this Kingdom, Would not Persons, who wrote his Life in his own Time, or immediately after; Would not Writers, who explained his Laws, and exhorted the People to observe them, who justified his Title, and laid down their Lives to support his Succession; Would not the Tradition from Father to Son down to us, be a convincing Proof of the Truth of the Fact? Now, Have we not a greater Number of Writings and Monuments of this Nature, for the Truth of the Gospel Facts, preserved in the Archives of the Church, even with greater Care, than any civil or profane History ever was? Would not, therefore, a Man deserve to be begged for something very extraordinary, who should doubt of the Truth of them, let them be done, as yet, by what Power you please?

THERE

THERE is a trifling Objection, some People make against this Part of Christianity; which is taken from the Life of *Julian* the Apostate, a great Hero with the Free-thinkers. Most People know, that he succeeded *Constantine the Great's* Sons in the Empire: This Man, say they, was a learned Man, and bred a Christian, yet he not only forsook that Religion, but wrote strenuously against it. They might add, and stirred up Earth and Hell to destroy it; yet failed in his impious Attempts: And, if Christian Historians may be believed, there is great Appearance, that he was cut off by the Hand of God for his Impieties: It is certain, he was killed after a strange Manner in a Battle against the *Persians*.

BUT not to enter into a History foreign to the History of the Gospel, it is evident, that *Julian the Apostate* had more politick than religious Motives for his Apostasy. For as the greatest Part of the People were yet *Pagans*, and some Provinces of the Empire chiefly Heathen; as most Part of *Germany*, and some Part of *Britany* and *Gaul*, where he was, when he began his Rebellion against his lawful Emperor, and from whence the greatest Strength of the *Roman Empire* was drawn at that Time;

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he joined with the *Pagan* Faction to gain his Ends; they on their Side looking on him as the last Support of their sinking Cause: Notwithstanding all his Pretences, that the Army had elected him Emperor against his Will, and the like, he was looked upon as a Rebel by his lawful Emperor, and Kinsman, who was marching against him to chastise his Rebellion, but died in the Way: This appears by almost all the Histories of those Times. *Vide Fleury's Ecclesiastical History, Tome IV.* where he quotes most of the Historians, who gave any Account of *Julian the Apostate*. Beside his raising himself thus to the Empire, by the heathen Party, in Opposition to the Christians, when he endeavoured to establish that impious Race again, we need only consider the Tribes of Gods and Goddesses, with their idolatrous Temples, Altars, Sacrifices, Lustrations, and other heathenish and hellish Rites he set up, to pass a right Judgment of the Man. Can such a Religion be rational? If the Free-thinkers are proud of such a Man for their Hero, the Christians will not envy them; neither will it do Christianity any Harm, if we grant, that *Julian* had as little interior Religion as the Free-thinkers themselves.

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WHAT the Free-thinkers can object further against the Sacred Historians, is, That they were Christians: But did they not pretend to the Veracity of Historians too? Did they not write in the Face of the World? Did they not write in the Midst of Enemies? Did they not write against the Incredulous? Did they not write in Languages, known at that Time to the greatest Part of the World? Were not some of them Philosophers, and Orators, and, indeed, the learnedst Men in their respective Ages? Had they, or could they have any Ends or Interests, but those of publishing the Truth to all Men? When the Doctrine they taught was opposite to the Interest of this World, and the chief Ties of Flesh and Blood. Did they not write at different Times, different Places, different Ages? Could they all agree to cheat the World, and themselves to boot? Were there not some Men of Sense, Men of Wit, Learning, and bright Parts in those Ages, as well as now; who would not be imposed upon by Cheats and Impositions, any more than the Deists? I am sure there were Free-thinkers and Free-actors enough in all Ages, but those never were, nor ever will be looked upon as Men of sound Sense and Judgment, let their

Wit be what it will. In short, let the Deists turn over the extant Works of Antiquity, from the Apostles Time down to us, and see, *First*, Whether they can find any Facts more authentically recorded than the Gospel Facts. Or, *2dly*, Whether any Histories in the World can have more authentick Marks of Sincerity, Integrity, Veracity, than those Writers seem to breathe through all their Works; or better Opportunities of knowing the Truth of what they writ; or *less Interest* in disguising it: If they can, one may say they have some Appearance of Reason on their Side; if they cannot, as I am sure they cannot, let them own, that if any historical Facts can be true, the Gospel Facts must be so. To these they may add the corroborating Testimonies of some of the heathen Writers of the first Ages, with others cited by the learned *Grotius*, *Lib. de ver. Rel. Chris. cum Notis Johannis Clerici*; a Man no Way partial in regard of Religion.

WE ought not to omit the Testimony of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, a heathen Author, concerning the impious Attempt of *Julian the Apostate*, to rebuild *Jerusalem* contrary to the Prophecy of our Saviour: His Words are, " When *Alypius* strongly urged the Work, and the Governor of
 " the

“ the Province affixed, fearful Globes of
 “ Fire darting out from the Foundations
 “ with continual Flashings, made the Place
 “ inaccessible, burning the Workmen fe-
 “ veral Times; so the Work was forced to
 “ be laid aside by the obstinate Resistance
 “ of the fiery Element.” *Ammianus Mar-*
cellinus, Lib. XXIII. c. 1.

NOR the Testimony of *Macrobius*, ano-
 ther heathen Writer, confirming the Mur-
 der of the Holy Innocents by *Herod the*
Great, in Hopes of destroying Christ.
 Speaking of the Jest of *Augustus Cæsar*,
 Co-temporary with *Herod*, he says, “ When
 “ he heard, that among the Children
 “ whom *Herod* had put to Death *within*
 “ *two Years of Age*, *Herod's* own Son was
 “ put to Death also, he said, it was better
 “ be *Herod's* Swine than his Son.” *Ma-*
crobius, Saturnal. Lib. II. c. 4. *De Jocis*
Augusti Cæsaris. Several other Testimo-
 nies of heathen Authors may be seen in
 the learned *Grotius*, as quoted just before.
 But there is another Consideration, which
 ought to have very great Weight with
 Men, who pretend to be critically incli-
 ned, which is,

FIFTHLY, The *general Silence* of the
 Adversaries of Christianity in that Point,
 at the Time when the Facts were publish-

ed, and sounded in the Ears of every body. *Silence*, as strong as the Voice of Fame! If those Facts were all Cheats and Impostures shammed upon the World, as the Deists say, Why did not the *Jews*, Why did not the Heathen and Incredulous confute them immediately, and record the *Forgery* to Posterity? Why do not the Deists now endeavour to produce some more authentick Monuments of Antiquity to counterbalance the Christian Writers, and other ancient Testimonies in their Favour? But so far is Antiquity from furnishing us with any Thing of Moment, to be set in Opposition to these Facts, that it has been the chief Endeavour of all Impostors, since that Time, to set up something like it of their own, to establish the Reputation of their different Sects by *mimicking* the true Facts of the Gospel: And by the By, this is one of the Ways the Deists pretend to invalidate the Truth and Force of those Facts; not by shewing them to be mere Forgeries, for that were too hard a Task; but by setting up the Impostures of *Mahomet*, and *Apollonius Thyaneus* in Opposition to them; which, instead of disproving them, shews that all the World then believed them to be true.

SIXTHLY,

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SIXTHLY, *Universal and uninterrupted Tradition*, from the very Time the Facts were done, down to this present Age. So that we may trace the Belief of them from this Day *upwards*, through every Age and every Generation, till we come to the living Generation, who saw them with their Eyes; which *Tradition* alone, if there were no other *Histories* and *Monuments* for it, as there are innumerable, were sufficient to convince the most incredulous of the unquestionable Truth of the aforesaid Facts. So that we may as well call in Question the Coming in of *William the Conqueror*; his Beating King *Harold*, and Changing the Laws and Constitution of this Land, as imagine that such a Tradition might be deceived.

SEVENTHLY, Publick Feasts, Rites and Ceremonies instituted from that Time in Veneration and perpetual *Memory* of some of the principal Parts of the Divine Author's Life, and Miracles; such as *Christmas*, in Memory of his Birth, and the Wonders attending it; *Easter*, in Memory of his Resurrection from Death to Life; *Pentecost*, in Memory of the Descent of the *Holy Ghost*; *Ascension*, in Memory of his *Ascent* into Heaven. The Institution of the

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Sacraments, particularly Baptism, which at first was performed by Immerſion, as an Emblem of our Dying and Riſing with Chriſt; as alſo the Impoſition of Hands for the Giving the Holy Spirit. In a Word, the whole Form and Inſtitution of the Chriſtian Religion is an indelible Monument of the Signs and Wonders performed by the Divine Author of it.

FROM hence it follows, that if innumerable Facts, capable of being known and diſcovered by the common Senſes of Mankind, performed in the Eyes of innumerable Witneſſes; publickly declared, and put to the Teſt of all the World upon the Spot; recorded by the moſt authentick Hiſtories and Monuments; never diſproved by the moſt violent Adverſaries; tranſmitted down to us by univerſal and uninterrupted Tradition; and perpetuated by the moſt ſolemn Rites and Ceremonies in Memory of them: If ſuch Facts can be falſe, we may doubt of any paſt Facts in the World.

§. II.

§. II.

Some other Objections against this Article.

IT is evident from what has been said, that whoever would call the Gospel Facts in Question, as to the Reality of them, let the Power by which they were done, be what it will, ought to be put on the same Parallel, with a Man, who should deny all historical and past Facts whatsoever, *i. e.* must be an universal *Sceptick* in *History*, as well as Reason; which is a Length our modern Unbelievers never durst go yet: By Consequence, all the Deists Objections, or rather *Cavils*, for they can be nothing else, ought to make no more Impression on any one, as to this Article, than if they should endeavour to persuade us out of our common Senses. So far is this Part of Christianity from being irrational.

FOR Instance, if they should ask, as they would insinuate sometimes, Could not *Jesus Christ* impose and slur those apparent Miracles upon his Apostles and Disciples, simple and illiterate Men as they were; and

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and they also upon others, till at last, the World was worked up into a general Belief of them? Answer, That perhaps they might, if they had neither Eyes nor Ears, or would renounce their common Senses: Just as a Man could persuade this City, that he carried away *Paul's Church*, Steeple and all, upon his Shoulders; but then, not only the Apostles, but his greatest Enemies must have joined with him in the Cheat. I hope this requires no further Answer. When they say, *and they upon others*, they should have added, *and those, simple and illiterate Men as they were, might impose upon the whole World*; for that is really the *English* of it. The Free-thinkers, indeed, can persuade themselves into very unaccountable Tenets; but they have some particular Motives for it, which the Apostles never had: What those Motives are, is obvious enough by their Lives and Practice.

BUT, Could there not be some *Juggle* or Tricks of Legerdemain in the Case? Answer, That it must be Legerdemain with a Witness, to call dead Men out of their Graves, with all the other Prodigies recorded of Jesus Christ. It must be a strange Juggle indeed, for a Person to suffer himself to be arraigned, and condemn-

ned in the most solemn Manner, where a King, a *Roman* Governor, with all the great Men of the Country, were concerned, to be crucified like a notorious Malefactor, till he was dead, and laid in his Grave; and then to rise and appear in Glory, to converse with Men publicly for forty Days, and at last to mount above the highest Heavens in the Sight of so many Witnesses, who afterwards chose to lay down their Lives, rather than deny the Truth of what they saw. Well, but could not he allure his Disciples by false Promises, Hopes of Grandeur, Riches, Pleasures, &c. to join with him, and preach up those Facts, till he had got Followers enow to carry all the World before him? Answer, This might have some faint Appearance, if they were the only Spectators, and Witnesses of what he did. But how so many Thousands, or a whole Nation, could be gulled out of their Senses, I cannot so well see. Though here one might ask the Deists, What were those Promises and Allurements? Why Poverty, Misery, Persecutions, and Death; for neither by his Example, or Words, did he promise them any Thing else; at least in this World; and it was the Truth of his Miracles, that encouraged them in the Hopes of the next.

Nor

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Nor did they, or their Successors, for some Hundreds of Years, experience any better; and all this, in the Opinion of the Deists, for the most notorious, nonsensical Lye that ever was. In short, the Supposal of it is so impossible, so grossly absurd and ridiculous, that all the Sarcasms of the Deists can never come up to what it deserves.

IF they urge further, that the *Jews* at that Time expected such a Person; they had been used to be lead by Wonders and Prodigies; beside, Superstition was almost natural to them, and the like. Answer, 1st, That their expecting such a Person of such Consequence to them, as the Messiah was to be, should have made them *pry* more narrowly into his Behaviour, whether he were the Person they expected, or not. 2^{dly}, Such a general Expectation, rather makes for the Cause of the Christians than against it; for nothing could answer such an Expectation better than he did, as to all its Circumstances, if we consider the true Nature and Grounds for such an Expectation. 3^{dly}, The *Jews* blinded with the Pride of this World, by an obstinate and wilful Mistake, did not expect his Coming in such an humble and poor Manner; and therefore the Generality of them rejected him, as their own Prophecies

cies assured they would do; persecuted him with the utmost Severity, and would have detected all his Impostures, if it had been possible there should have been any such. As for their being used to be lead by Wonders and Prodigies, since there is nothing specified in the Objection, I only say, that supposing here the Wonders of the *Old Testament* to be true, they confirm the same *Testament*; and by Consequence, not only some revealed Religion, to which the Deists are as great Enemies, as they are to Christianity; but also some of the Parts of and Grounds for Christianity: The two Testaments bearing Witness to one another. If the Objector means any Impostor preceding the Coming of Jesus Christ, it may be easily answered, that where People have been imposed upon before, they generally become more cautious and circumspect: But that they could not be cheated in this Point, the Proofs alledged for the Gospel Facts, put it out of all Dispute.

THEN, for the Superstition so very natural to them, as the Objector would have us believe, it was a Superstition directly contrary to him, not for him; which makes it ten Times harder, for the Signs and Wonders done by him, to have past the Test of so many, and such powerful

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Adversaries. But, in fine, say they, strange Cheats have been imposed upon the World before now, Witness *Mahomet* and *Apollo-nius Thyanaeus*, *Simon Magus*, &c. I answer, and agree with them, that those indeed were very great Cheats; But have not those Cheats been discovered? Can Men of Sense ever think them to be any Thing else? Might not the Imposture, particularly of *Mahomet*, which may have some Appearance of a Difficulty, have been laid open on the Spot; only it was not very safe arguing against a hundred thousand Robbers and Villains, who found their Count in those Cheats? Had *Jesus Christ* aimed at universal Empire, had he headed a numerous Army, and promised his Followers the Spoils of the World, if they would but do as he commanded them, there might be some Face of a Parallel; but it is quite a different Case, to promise Men nothing but Poverty, Self-Denials, and Death, to oblige them to Virtue, Sobriety, Chastity, Contempt of all the World thought great and glorious, of Riches, Honours, Pleasures, with all that was most dear to them, for no other Hopes or Advantages, but of being the most miserable of all Men, as certainly they were, if there was nothing else but
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Sham and Imposture in the Matter; and to promise a Pack of Thieves and Outlaws, that the whole World, with the Spoils thereof, was their own, if they would but follow him, alluring them with all the Liberties capable of gratifying Sense and Passion; not only permitting, but encouraging the greatest Crimes, till he had secured himself and his Followers in the Possession of *irresistible* Power, more feelingly persuasive with such People, than any other Reasons he could bring. But it is a Shame to dwell any longer on such a Parallel. I only say, in short, let the Deists produce any ancient Facts, religious or profane, in the whole Extent of History so well ascertained to us, as the Gospel Facts, recorded of Jesus Christ; and if what proves one, will not prove the other, so that to deny them, would reduce us to universal Scepticism, even in History, I will own the Deists may have some Pretence to Argumentation in their Opinions. In one Word, it is evident, that as to all the Parallels against the Gospel Facts, they have brought hitherto, any one of a very moderate Share of Sense and Learning, might confute them^a.

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^a Let them only read the Account the great *Eusebius* gives of *Apollonius Thyaneus*, in his Treatise against *Hierocles*, to be convinced of his Impostures.

SINCE, therefore, the Matter of Fact concerning the Signs and Wonders recorded of *Jesus Christ*, is most certainly true, as recorded, let them be done, as yet, by what Power you please; it being also one of the most extravagant Enterprizes the *Deists* ever undertook, to call them in Question: It follows, that all other Things recorded by the sacred Historians, must likewise be true; since he that deserves Credit in Matters of the greatest Moment, deserves it also in less Matters; and, if these were true, without doubt there were infinite others in the Process of his *Mission*, which those sacred Writers did not commit to History, as one of them assures us; all which put together, make up the most accumulative and invincible Proofs for his Divine Authority, as can be desired; and truly the unheard-of Effects they wrought in the Conversion of the World, argued something more than human in them; but this afterwards. It only remains now, since those Facts are incontestably true, that we consider, whether the same Facts, taken in all their Circumstances, are not as incontestable a Proof, that the Author of them was sent by God, as he declares himself to have been.

SECTION III.

The Signs and Wonders recorded of, and wrought by Jesus Christ, taken in all their Circumstances, antecedent, concomitant, and subsequent, are an invincible Proof, that he was sent by God.

§. I.

AS it is evident, that the Deists can produce no Proofs for any past historical Facts, which do not at the same Time prove the Reality of the Facts recorded of *Jesus Christ*; so I believe it is not in their Power to assign any Ways and Means, by which God could manifest his Will to Mankind, so as to convince the World of the Truth of it, if the wonderful Works performed by *Jesus Christ* cannot do it. It is a Maxim with Philosophers, That an Argument either proves too much; or nothing, that has the same Force against a *real* Truth, as it has against what it impugns. Now, put the Case for a Moment, that God did actually send *Jesus Christ* to reform the World;

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that it was by his Divine Power, those Wonders he wrought, were performed; or which comes to the same Effect, put the Case, that God should send a Law-giver, as it is evident he might, to promulgate his Will, and the particular Points of his Worship: In this Supposition, all the Deists Arguments have the same Force, as they have against Christianity. Let such a Law-giver work what Wonders he pleases, to convince us of the Truth of his Mission, we might still say with the Deists, that *we do not know the Extent of Nature*; and by Consequence, could not tell whether he came from God, or not; and by a further Consequence, should not be obliged to believe him. The *Deists* need only apply this to themselves; the Inconsistence of such a Way of reasoning is palpable.

As to the *Divine Mission* of *Jesus Christ* the Case stands thus: Here is a Person appears upon Earth, (I suppose the Deists would not have him appear in all Places at once) and declares to all the World, that he was sent from God, to establish a new Law, a spiritual Kingdom, which was not to be according to the Ways of this World; but to consist in Righteousness and Truth; to correct the innumerable and inveterate Errors of Men; to destroy the Empire of Sin,

Sin, and set up that of Virtue and Sanctity; to preach a new Doctrine, unknown and unheard of before; to establish Maxims directly opposite to Flesh and Blood, contrary to the universal Practice of Men: In short, to reform the World, and oblige them to live up to the rigid Laws of Christianity. A hard Task! Our modern Infidels being a Proof of it. To confirm what he says and teaches, and to convince them of his Divine Authority, and Truth of his Mission, he performs such Wonders and Prodigies, as never were, or could be done by Men, without some supernatural Power; such as were mentioned in the last Article; the Reality of which, as to the Matter of Fact, has been shewn to be so thoroughly established, that no one pretending to History can call them in Question. Now, if one should ask the Deists, What Signs and Tokens could he give, had he been really sent by God, greater than what he gave? what could they say, which would not equally make against themselves? As those Wonders and Prodigies were the most strongly attested, as to the Truth of them, so they were as nicely examined into, as to the *Power* by which they were done; and nothing merely human could be discovered in them; yet the Deists must say,

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that these were all done to confirm a Lye, and the greatest Cheat in Nature; which, I believe, none but Deists can comprehend. To these unheard-of Wonders, performed by him, beside their own Nature, and the concomitant Proofs, such wonderful corroborating Circumstances, both antecedent and subsequent, concur, that all duly considered, no human Power, or the Invention of Man, could be the Author of them; and by Consequence, they prove invincibly, that he was sent from God, as he declared he was. These Circumstances they must give me Leave to explain more at large in the following Paragraphs.

§. II.

The Nature of the Gospel Facts in themselves, and the concomitant Circumstances of them.

WHOSOEVER grants the historical Part of the *New Testament*, (which we must grant, or may as well doubt of all ancient History) leaves very little Difficulty in proving the Divine Authority of the Person, whose Works are
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there recorded: *First*, because it is inconceivable to human Reason, *how* those Wonders could be performed by any *natural Power*; therefore we may immediately affirm, that they are *above Nature*, as to the Comprehensibility of them: And to go no further, it is the greatest Rashness to assert, they might have been done by natural Means: For though I do not know the Extent of Nature, shall I say for that Reason, that perhaps this City, Houses and Churches, may rise up and take a Journey into *France* To-morrow Morning; because I do not know what Wonders may happen in Nature? Now, several of the Works performed by *Jesus Christ*, seem to be as much above the Extent of Nature, as that this material City should take a Journey into *France*, or fly up to the Moon: Neither can the Deists assign any Effects to be done, to convince Men of the Truth, which may argue a supernatural Power, if the Works done by him do not. It is quite a different Case, to say in a general negative Way, that we do not know the Extent of Nature, as we really do not, and to say so, when the Works are positive, performed openly without any Disguise, without any Possibility of Juggle, or Imposture; when they have been examined,

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ned, searched, and pried into, with all the Care an incredulous Race was capable of; when they have been compared with all the Effects and Efforts of Art and Nature ever yet discoverable, and nothing that could come up to them, was ever produced hitherto; when no other Cause can be assigned for them, but a Divine Power superior to all Nature, to which the Author himself appeals, declaring they were done by the Power of God; and suffering Death for the constant Assertion of such a Power residing in him, as his mortal Enemies declared, when they said they did not condemn him for his Works, but for that being a Man, he made himself God. Now, can any one in his Senses believe, that a bare saying, *we do not know the Extent of Nature*, can ever be a sufficient Motive to make us imagine the contrary? Or, indeed, ever doubt of the Truth of it? But there is in the Gospel Facts something much more positive than all this, which is,

SECONDLY, That the *chief Laws of Nature*, known to Men from the World's first Infancy to this Day, were *de Facto exceeded* by the Works of *Jesus Christ*. They must give me Leave to reckon up some of them again in this Place, as the
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Healing all Sorts of Infirmities, present or absent, with a Word, (the Facts having been proved already) Changing one Substance into another, as Water into Wine at the Marriage of *Chanaan*; Causing Storms and Tempests to cease with a single Command; Walking on the Waves of the Sea, and Making others do so; Calling dead Men out of their Graves, and restoring them to Life; nay, himself too, after he had been condemned, and put to a most cruel Death in the most publick and notorious Manner; Making illiterate Men speak all Languages in a Moment; Mounting up to Heaven at Mid-day in full View of Multitudes of People, contrary to the universal *Course of natural Causes*, the *Laws of Gravity*, Motion, &c. and all the *known Bounds of Nature*; and by Consequence, were done by a *Power superior* to all Nature.

THIRDLY, Those Works could not have been done by the black Art, or by having Recourse to the Ministry of the Devil; because, *first*, the Deists do not care to admit of those black Spirits; neither, *2dly*, can it consist with their System; besides, *3dly*, our Blessed Saviour came to destroy the Power of the Devil, to dispossess him of all his Dominions, if the Deists will allow him to have any, to

establish a Doctrine the most odious to him and all his *Agents*, containing nothing but Purity and Sanctity; and therefore, 4thly, as he confuted the *Jews* in that Point, we may say, that a Kingdom divided in itself could not stand; but, that the Kingdom of God was certainly come among them.

FOURTHLY, Neither was it possible, as was observed before, that there should have been any *Prestigiæ*, *Deceptio Visus*, *Legerdemain*, or any *Hocus Pocus* Cheats in the Case, unless Men were quite conjured out of their Wits; or unless we cannot be certain, but that we may be walking in an enchanted Castle, or taking a Voyage up to the Moon, when we are talking to our Friends in our own Houses. Strange Things, I own, are done in that Kind in the Eyes of the Vulgar: But what poor Businessses are they, when they come to be discovered? Wonderful Cheats also have been palmed upon the World for some Time; but then Time itself, the Discoverer of Errors, and Confirmer of Truth, has at last laid all open. Can any Thing like this be said of the Gospel Facts? Was ever any Discovery made? Or, Could any Thing possibly be Cheat, that had such real, such amazing Effects? Why do not
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the Deists assemble all the Posse of those *Hocus Pocus* Gentlemen, and try to raise a really dead Man to Life again? I hope the more Judicious will pardon the Time spent only in mentioning Things so ridiculously disproportionate.

FIFTHLY, Nor can it be said, that those Signs and Wonders happened by Chance, or were luckily timed, as some pretend to say of the Division of the *Red Sea* for the Passage of the Children of *Israel*. *First*, Because most of them were such as could never be foreseen, or imagined possible, till they were done. *2dly*, Because the real immediate Cause of them was there present before their Eyes. *3dly*, Because several of them were done upon the Spot, at different Times, different Occasions, when he was required to prove the Truth of what he said, to convince the World, that he was sent from God; to make known to them the Ways of eternal Life, that by seeing the Divine Wonders which he wrought, not only superior to, but even contrary to the known Laws of Nature, Men might rationally believe, he was sent by the Author of all Nature. Nor,

SIXTHLY, Could they object any Thing against his Life, Manners, or Doctrine; his

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his Life and Practice being entirely consistent with, and agreeable to what he taught; inculcating the true Worship of God, and the Ways of Virtue and Sanctity, far beyond all the Law-givers that ever appeared upon Earth; and, indeed, with that Divine Force and Energy, as made it appear, there was something more than human Power and Wisdom in every Thing he said or did. It is true, some of the *Credenda* he proposed were hard to conceive, and, I will own, *incomprehensible*; as all that belongs to the Attributes of God must be, when we come to be too inquisitive about them, though not contradictory to natural Reason; neither can they ever be shewed to be so: Nevertheless, the *Authority* declaring those *Credenda* was so forcible, that none but Men abandoned to their Passions and Prejudices could call them in Question. I am sure his Divine Authority appeared so clear, to those who saw those Wonders performed, or the immediate Effects of them, that Thousands and Thousands, and among those, Men of the best Sense, Learning, Integrity, and Sanctity, chose rather to lose their Lives, and suffer the Separation of all that was dear to them, than to act contrary to the Belief, and

and interior Conviction of such unquestionable Authority.

SEVENTHLY, I make bold to repeat it once more, that if the Wonders performed by *Jesus Christ*, considered in all their due Circumstances, do not argue the Finger of God in them, we must say, that nothing else he could do, at least, as we can assign, can stop the Mouths of our modern Infidels: So that whatsoever they bring against those Facts equally invalidates the *Possibility* of God's manifesting his Will to Men; for whatever Method he might take, some clear-sighted Deist or other could say, we do not know the Extent of Nature; therefore, *perhaps* we may be imposed upon.

FROM what has been said only of the Gospel Facts considered in themselves, with their concurrent Circumstances, it is palpable to common Sense, that whether the Deists deny the Reality of those Facts; or granting the Truth of them, deny the Divine Mission of their Author, they are reduced to the last Stretch of Inconsistency; that it is impossible for unprejudiced Sense and Reason to go the Lengths they are forced to go, when they would either call them in Question, or deny the Divine Power and Energy conspicuous in them.

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They should likewise be advised to stand to one Side or other in this Point, and not to fall a questioning the Power, when we are talking of the Facts; nor fly back to the Facts, when we are disputing about the Power. Then, they ought not to stop at either of them alone, but to turn their Eyes to the collateral and corroborating Circumstances, both antecedent and subsequent to them; whoever does so, must own, that if Men are Infidels, they are Infidels without Excuse; and that God has left nothing undone, without forcing our free Judgments, to render his Testimonies exceeding credible.

§. III.

Corroborating Circumstances, antecedent to the Gospel Facts.

THE Circumstances *antecedent* to the Coming of *Jesus Christ*, confirming almost every Particular of his Divine Mission, were the reiterated *Promises*; or, if the Deists will give me Leave to call them so, the almost innumerable *Prophecies*, assuring

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uring Mankind, that such a Person was to come, and who was to teach the World the Ways of eternal Life.

FIRST, That there were such Promises in the sacred Archives, and publick Records of the *Jews*, a Nation the most scrupulous, and the most exact in that Point, that ever were, the Deists, I presume, will not dispute; since those very People, as perverse as they are, even hitherto build their Hopes on the Expectation of such a Person to come. The most signal Prophecies were, *that* made to *Abraham* recorded by *Moses*, *Gen.* xxii. 18. confirmed to *Jacob*, *Gen.* xxviii. 14. the famous Prophecy concerning *Judah*, *Gen.* xlix. 10. that of *Moses*, *Deut.* xvii. 15. to *David*, *Psal.* cx. 14. cxxxii. 10. ii. 7, 8. *Chron.* xvii. 14. to *Abaz*, *Isa.* vii. 10. to *Daniel*, *Ch.* ix. 24, 25. & *deinceps*. These were understood by the *Jews* of a Law-giver and Deliverer to come; as no one yet undertook to disprove.

SECONDLY, That such a Person was expected, at or about that Time in which our Blessed Saviour appeared to the World, is certain, not only from the Gospel and Christian Historians; but also from *Josephus*, *Suetonius*, *Tacitus*, the Oracles of the *Sybills*, mentioned by *Cicero* and *Virgil*,
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with a great many other *Testimonies* looking that Way, cited by *Grotius, Lib. de ver. Rel. Chris. Edit. Johannis Clerici.*

THIRDLY, That the Prophecies concerning the *Messiah* do agree with the Coming of *Jesus Christ* in the most minute Circumstances of his Birth, Life, Miracles, Preaching, Doctrine, Death, Burial, &c. The Deists need only compare the *Old* and *New Testament* together to be fully satisfied in that Point; all which Testimonies and Places, I would quote here at length, if the Stress of the Difficulty lay there. Beside, such an Examination more properly belongs to a Work of another Nature; as it has been already done by several able Pens, particularly in that learned and laborious Defence of Christianity by the late Bishop of *Litchfield* and *Coventry*. However, it may be said in short, that those celebrated Prophecies understood by the *Jews* of the *Messiah* to come, if they had any Meaning in them, could not be applied to any other than to *Jesus Christ*; and were as exactly fulfilled in him, as if they had been made expressly concerning him.

If you ask, Why did not the *Jews* understand their own Prophecies in that Sense? Or, How came the Christians to understand

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stand them better than the *Jews*? The Answer is very obvious; because there were several Things of a seemingly different Nature, foretold of the Messiah, some of them great and glorious, of his new Kingdom that should last for ever; of his being their Deliverer from their Enemies that kept them in Slavery; of his Might and Power that was to subdue and humble the Great ones of the Earth, &c. which have been fulfilled in destroying the Power of the Devil, and establishing a spiritual Kingdom, which will last till the End of the World, in Spite of all the vain Efforts of the Deists against it; and moreover he has literally subdued the most powerful Empire, that ever was upon Earth, *i. e.* the *Roman*, by bringing it under the sweet Yoke of Christianity: Neither can it be denied, but that the Christian World at present, were they all to be united together, is the most powerful by far of all the other Parts of the World. On the other Hand, there were several Things foretold of him, not only ungrateful and shocking to such a proud earthly Race as the *Jews* were, but also mean and despicable; nay, even incredible, and, in Appearance, irreconcilable with the glorious Things that were said of him, till the *Event* manifestly

verified them; such as his Poverty, Humility, Meanness of Birth, &c. his being to be betrayed, and sold by his own People; and lastly, to be put to Death as a publick Malefactor: All which were as exactly foretold of him, as were the Triumphs and Glories of his spiritual Kingdom; some of the same Prophets that foretold the one, foretold the other; which, though it rendered the *Jews* inexcusable, yet one may easily see the Reason, why such a proud and earthly Race would not receive him. The 2d Question, *viz.* How came the Christians to understand those Prophecies better than the *Jews*? turns upon a false Supposition, since they were the *Jews* themselves; I mean those Numbers, that were converted to Christianity by the Force of those Prophecies, and the other Wonders performed by him, that first understood those Prophecies of Jesus Christ, and by rightly understanding them, became Christians; nay, several of them laid down their Lives in Testimony of that Truth. Therefore,

FOURTHLY, Since those Prophecies were so exactly fulfilled by *Jesus Christ*, the chief Thing to be considered is, What Weight those Prophecies ought to carry along with them for the Proof of his Divine

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vine Mission: To this the famous Monsieur *Bayle*, whose good Sense the Deists, I know, will not call in Question, shall answer for me, in his Miscellaneous Reflexions on a Comet, *p.* 213, "We ought," says he, to consider, that the Knowledge of Futurity coming from God alone, there can be *no Presage* of Things contingent, which is not immediately appointed by him." Now, the Coming of our Saviour being so exactly foretold, even to such particular Circumstances, according to Mr. *Bayle's* Consequence, his Coming could be appointed by no other than by God; and consequently, he was sent immediately from God.

FIFTHLY, The Promises concerning the future Messiah, and the amazing Occurrences happening in the Life and Death of Jesus Christ, could not possibly be foretold, I will not say so many Ages before, but even in that very Age before they happened, by all the Wit and Inventions of Men put together; neither could the Deists with all their politick Engines, nor all the Efforts of our Adversaries, ever set up an Imposture so exactly agreeing with, and fulfilling those Prophecies, as *Jesus Christ* did.

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SIXTHLY,

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SIXTHLY, Whosoever knows and foretels future Contingents with a positive Certainty, must know all the Chain of Causes capable of disappointing, or not disappointing the Event: These Causes, with Accidents and Occurrences, disappointing, or not disappointing the Event, being infinite, the Knowledge must be also infinite; and by Consequence, must proceed from God alone: Therefore the Prophecies so exactly foretelling the Coming of *Jesus Christ*, were from God; therefore the Person fulfilling and accomplishing those Prophecies, was destined, and sent from God to fulfil them.

LASTLY, The Divine Inspiration of those Prophecies; and, indeed, the whole Christian Religion, is confirmed and enforced by the Wonders and Prodigies happening, and recorded in the other Parts of the *Old Testament*; both the Laws bearing Testimony to one another; the one as the Type and Promise, the other as the Accomplishment of them; so corroborating and enforcing each other, that it is beyond the Stretch of Invention to imagine any Imposture in the Case: Therefore, *Jesus Christ* was sent by God to teach the World; and to resist his Authority, is to resist the immediate Authority of God.

§. IV.

§. IV.

The celebrated Text of the seventh Chapter of ISAIAH examined.

ALTHOUGH, as was observed in the last Paragraph, the Examination of all the particular Prophecies relating to *Jesus Christ* requires a Work of another Nature, and would make this Treatise swell to too great a Bulk; nevertheless, since some Persons of late seem to lay a great deal of Stress on this Prophecy of *Isaiah*, as if it were not at all meant of *Jesus Christ*, but falsely applied to him by the Evangelist St. *Matthew*, Chap. i. and the rest of the Christians; I shall endeavour to shew, that this Prophecy is duly applied to our Blessed Saviour; and, indeed, is a most signal Testimony of those wonderful Benefits, he was to bring upon the Earth. I am not ignorant, that several learned Men have undertaken this Task before me; for which Reason it will not be necessary to descend to all the minute Circumstances, which may be seen in those Works, that treat expressly on the Subject: But, since every one's Thoughts do not agree with all People's Conceptions, this

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being an Objection on which our Adversaries seem to lay very great Stress, though, in Effect, they have the least Reason; I shall set both the Prophecy, and the Difficulties against it, in as clear a Light as is possible.

THE Prophecy, or rather the Beginning of the Prophecy, (for it runs through the greatest Part of the whole Book of *Isaiah*) stands thus: *Isaiah* vii. 10. & deinceps: *Moreover, the Lord spake again to Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a Sign of the Lord thy God, either in the Depth, or in the Height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O House of David, Is it a small Thing for you to weary Men, but will you weary my God also? [by being incredulous to all his Promises.] Therefore the Lord himself will give you a SIGN, Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Immanuel. Butter and Honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the Evil, and to choose the Good. For before the Child shall know to refuse the Evil, and choose the Good, the Land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her Kings. This is the first Part of the Prophecy concerning the great Immanuel, or God with us, beginning with*
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the Wonders of his Birth, and then running through the glorious Things that should be performed by him.

THIS famous Prophecy a certain Author, who, I hear, since is dead, and even some others, Persons of Sense and Learning, though of different Principles, think, ought not to be understood of Jesus Christ; but that it was only meant as a Promise and Sign to *Abaz*, that he should be delivered from the two Kings of Syria and Samaria, that were coming with such mighty Power against him: This they infer from those Words, *that before the^a Child should know how to refuse Evil, and choose Good*, the Land should be delivered. But it will appear evidently, by comparing the latter Part of the Prophecy with the first, that those Words signify, that *in the Space of Time that a new conceived Child can come to distinguish Good from Evil, i. e. in three or four Years, the Land should be delivered*, to convince them of the foregoing Wonder, viz. *That a Virgin should conceive*.

THEY endeavour also to prove their Assertion by *Ch. viii. 3. And I went to a Prophetess, [and took Witnesses along with me, Ver. 2.] and she conceived, and bare a Son;*

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^a The Word *Puer*, without an Article or Preposition, signifies a Child, as well as the Child.

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then said the *Lord*, *Call his Name Maher-shalal-hash-baz*; which the *Latin Vulgate* explains, *Accelera Spolia detrahere, festina prædari*, *Run to snatch the Spoils, hast to the Prey*; for before the Child shall have Knowledge to cry, *My Father and my Mother*, the *Riches of Damascus*, and the *Spoil of Samaria*, shall be taken away before the *King of Assyria*. In fine, they pretend to confirm their Opinion by *Ver. 18. ib.* *Behold, I and the Children whom the Lord has given me, for Signs and Wonders in Israel*: Therefore, say they, this Prophecy must be understood either of the Prophet's Son, or of some other Child to be born about that Time; and, by Consequence, cannot be applicable to *Jesus Christ*; which last Consequence does not at all follow from the Premises; for a Child born in such wonderful Circumstances, and for such an unexpected Delivery, might very well be a *Type* of the great *Messiah* to come. But there is something much stronger than this in the foregoing Prophecy. Wherefore,

I BELIEVE this grand Objection, with all its pretended Proofs, will come to nothing, if the three following Points be fully made out. *First*, That this Prophecy could not be understood, either of the *Prophet's*

phet's Son, or of *Ezechiah*, *Abaz's* Successor, or of a Child to be born to *Abaz* after the Prophecy, or, in fine, of any other Child, or King of *Judah*, till our Saviour's Time.

SECONDLY, That the *Delivery* of the Land from the two invading Kings of *Syria* and *Samaria*, though it was a signal Type of the great Deliverance from the Tyranny of Sin, and Death, to be performed by the glorious *Immanuel*, was, nevertheless, intended for the present Confirmation of the first Part of the Prophecy, viz. of that unheard-of, and seeming incredible *Wonder*, of a *Virgin's* bringing forth, &c. And,

THIRDLY, That the Christian Explication does perfectly well agree with the Prophecy; but that, if it be taken in another Sense, it can have no Meaning at all in it. I say, if these three Points be fully made out, it is evident, this Objection can have no Force, unless with those who run away with every Thing, that seems to favour their Design.

As to the first, it is certain, that Prophecy could not possibly agree, either with the Prophet's Son, or with any other Child, or King of *Judah*, till our Saviour's Time, as will appear by the Prophet's own Words;

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especially, if we take in several Considerations of very great Weight, both antecedent and subsequent to the Time in which the Prophecy was given. The first Consideration is, that all those who are acquainted with the History of the *Old Testament*, and the Religion of the *Jews*, know very well, that those People had several Prophecies, and reiterated Promises made to them, by Persons whom they reputed inspired by God, of a *Deliverer* to come, who was to be of the Tribe of *Judah*, and of the House of *David*; who was to establish his Kingdom above all Nations, &c. and with these Hopes they comforted themselves in their greatest Misfortunes. The Places of these Promises I have quoted in the foregoing Paragraph. This is so well known, that it would be to suppose the Reader very ignorant, to endeavour to prove it. Another Consideration is, that it appears in the very same Chapter, *Ver.* 6. that the neighbouring Princes, Enemies of the *Jews*, had both a Notion and Fear of this great Deliverer to come, as it was almost impossible they should not have some Knowledge of it; and were resolved to prevent it, if they could, by destroying the House of *David*, and setting up a King of another Race in their own Defence;

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fence; wherefore it is said, *Ver. 6. Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a Breach therein for us, and set up a King in the Midst of it.* From whence a third Consideration is very natural, *viz.* that *Abaz*, and the rest of the Princes of *Judah* were seized with a double Consternation, the one for fear the House of *David* should be destroyed; and by Consequence, all the Hopes of their Messiah lost with it: The other, for their own present Danger; so that it was necessary the Prophet should give them fresh Assurance of both. And truly, not only *Abaz*, but the rest of the Princes of *Judah* were so dispirited with the Threats and Preparations made against them, that they would not believe, that God could either fulfil his Promises, or deliver them from the present Danger: So far, as to *weary God himself* with their incredulous Diffidence, *Ver. 3.* This dismal State of theirs the Prophet represents in the foregoing Chapters to the seventh; as the greatest Part of the rest of the Chapters to the End of the Book runs upon the wonderful Benefits they were to receive by this Child, this great *Immanuel*, that was to be born to them. Was not *this*, therefore, the proper Time for the Prophet to confirm them in their *ancient Faith*,

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Faith, by assuring them, that God would never forget his Promises, and never forsake the House of *David*, till their *Messiah* was come? And that too by the greatest Wonder that ever happened in Nature, viz. That a Virgin should conceive, &c. Then, to strengthen their Belief of so unheard-of a Miracle, he confirms it by a solemn Promise, that the Land should be delivered from the present Danger, in the Space of Time that a Child from his Conception should take, till he come to know Good from Evil.

THESE Considerations alone clear the two first Points I proposed, in Answer to the Objection; but there are some other Reasons, that set it beyond all Doubt, that this wonderful Child could never be the Prophet's Son, nor any other Child, till the Coming of Jesus Christ: Why so? Because the first Child, whose Birth was to be so wonderful, was to be *Immanuel*, or God with us, *Ver. 14.* He was to be *God himself*, who was to *come with a Vengeance*, who was to *come with a Recompence*, even to *come himself and save us*; who was to *open the Eyes of the Blind*, and *unstop the Ears of the Deaf*; to *make the lame Man leap as a Hart*, and the *Tongue of the Dumb sing*, Chap. xxxv. 3, 4, 5. Because he was to
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be a Child born to us, and a Son given to us, whose Government was to be upon his Shoulders: And his Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, Chap. ix. 6. Because he was to be a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, Ch. xi. 1. Upon whom the Spirit of the Lord was to rest, Ver. 2. He was to be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign for the People; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his Rest shall be glorious. The Latin Vulgate has it, and his Sepulchre shall be glorious, Ver. 10. which was most signally fulfilled in his glorious Resurrection; with infinite other Things running through the whole Book of Isaiah, concerning this great Immanuel. Now, Can any Thing of this Nature be said of this Prophet's Son? Is there any Mention of such a Son in the whole History of the Scripture afterwards? It is true, the Prophet says, Chap. viii. 18. Behold, I and the Children whom the Lord has given me, for Signs and Wonders in Israel. But, though this were to be understood of the Prophet's own Children, which several very learned Interpreters will not allow, but that it was meant of the Apostles and spiritual Children of the great Immanuel, as the Latin Translation expresses

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presses it, *Pueri*, not *Liberi*, my Children, or *Servants*: Nevertheless, if we understand that Verse, of the Prophet's Sons, they were only given as Signs of the present Delivery of the Land from the invading Kings, and not only a Type of the great *Immanuel*, but a Confirmation of his wonderful Birth, and the glorious Things he was to perform: For could that Son, *i. e.* the Child, (if by it is meant the Prophet's Son) that was to be born of the Prophets, be *Immanuel*, or God with us? The mighty God, The wonderful Counsellor, The Father of Ages to come, The Root of *Jesse*, that was to govern the *Gentiles*; with several other Characters, which, as will be seen by and by, could not agree with any but Jesus Christ? Or, Do we find any more Mention of such a Son in the whole History of the *Old Testament* afterwards? Much less could it be understood of any Son to be born to *Abaz* after the Prophecy, since we do not find he ever had such a Son, or, that his Queen was a Virgin at the Time of the Prophecy, but rather the contrary. Then for *Ezechiab*, he was already born some Years before; although he was a good Man, and favoured by God, it is evident, such glorious Titles could never be attributed to him;

him; neither was the End of his Reign so acceptable to God, as the Beginning; for we find in the second Book of *Kings*, Ch. xx. 18. that this very Prophet told him from God, that the Riches of his House should be carried away, and the Sons that he should beget, should be made *Eunuchs* in the Palace of the King of *Babylon*: And, I am sure, no other King or Ruler after him could ever pretend to it. *Josiah's* Reign, indeed, had a promising Beginning; but then, it was soon at an End, and unfortunately too. Wherefore, it is beyond Contradiction, that this Prophecy could be understood of no other Child born before the Time of Jesus Christ; which of itself is sufficient to answer the Objection.

THE second Point to be made out, is, that the latter Part of the Prophecy, *viz.* The Deliverance of the Land from the invading Kings, though it was a Type of a much greater Deliverance from the Tyranny of the Devil, &c. was nevertheless a present Confirmation of the wonderful and *Virgin Birth* of the great *Immanuel*: This will appear, *first*, by the Consideration of the double Fear *Abaz*, and the Princes of the House of *David* lay under; on which Account, the Prophet was sent

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to them on a double Message; the one to raise their sinking Faith concerning the Messiah; for which Reason he addresses himself principally to the House of *David*, saying, *Hear ye, O House of David*, assuring them he would come, and in that wonderful Manner as he goes on to describe: The other, finding they were diffident and incredulous, even to be troublesome to God himself, was to convince them of the Truth of it, by the present Benefit of their Deliverance from the dreadful Power that threatened them. Neither, 2dly, could any Thing be more natural than such a Supposition, as is manifest by comparing the Parts of the Prophecy together; which, I hope, the Reader will not think too long, if I repeat it again in this Place. The Prophet is sent expressly by God to *Abaz*, and the House of *David*, now in a desponding Condition, not only for their own present Safety; but, what went much nearer their Hearts, and that of all the *Jewish* Nation, in Danger, as they thought, of having their House destroyed; and by Consequence, the Hopes of their great Messiah destroyed also: Nay, so far, that they would not ask a Sign of God for their Deliverance. God, therefore, assures them, that their Fears were vain, that

their so often promised Messiah would certainly come; and declares the Wonders of his Birth, that he should be born of a pure Virgin, that he should be *Immanuel*, &c. and although this may seem incredible to ye, to convince you, and give you a very present Proof of it, in the Space of Time that a Child from his Conception shall know how to distinguish Good from Evil, your Land you are in *such Concern for*^a, shall be delivered: What can be more natural? But, it seems, they remained diffident still; and truly the first Part of it was so wonderful, as needed, humanly speaking, something very extraordinary to make them believe it. *Abaz* was bid to ask a Sign in the Depth below, or in the Height above, *Ch. vii. 11.* yet he thought all was lost; then the Prophet, transported out of himself, and addressing himself to the House of *David*, as knowing the chief Cause of their Grief, said, the Lord himself will give you a Sign, *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive*, &c. your Messiah shall not fail to come for all this; he shall pass all the Bounds of Nature to help ye; and as for these two Kings you now dread so much, they shall be defeated, in the Time that is required for this very Child to know
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^a It is so in the *Arab.* and *Targ.* *Jonath.* instead of *the Land thou abhorrest.*

and to distinguish Evil from Good. There was certainly very great Reason to add this, to make them believe so stupendious a Prodigy, *viz.* That a Child should be born of a pure Virgin; that he should be God with us; that his Name should be Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, whose Kingdom should have no End; with all the other glorious Things the Prophet reckons up concerning him. Whereas, if all this Wonder had only been, that a young Woman should conceive by carnal Knowledge of a Man, how could that be a Sign given by God himself; and, as may be gathered from the Context, even greater than if *Abaz* had asked a Sign in the Depth below, or in the Height above? Yet farther, it appears by the same Context, that *Abaz*, and the House of *David*, took it to be so great a Wonder, that they could not yet believe it. Infomuch, that the Prophet was forced to accede to a Prophetess, *Chap. viii. 1.* to take Witnesses, *ibid.* and solemnly to engage, nay, to enter into a Contract too, that before his own Child should be born, and able to cry, *My Father*, the Truth of the first Part should be confirmed by such a forcible Argument, as the Deliverance of
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the Land from all its Enemies: This is not only a natural Explication, but seems to be the very Purport of that Part of the Prophecy. Besides, 3dly, the *bare Deliverance* of the Land from the present invading Kings could never be all that was meant by the wonderful Birth of the great *Immanuel*; nor could it answer all the glorious Things, the Prophet reckons up through the greatest Part of the Book afterwards, of that Child that was to be born to us; nor, in fine, whoever delivered the Land, could he be the mighty God, &c. *That* which determines the Case, and shews, that though the present Deliverance was a Type of our Deliverance from Death and Sin, &c. yet it was an immediate Confirmation of the foregoing Wonder, *viz.* That a Virgin should conceive, &c.

THE last Point I proposed in Answer to the Objection, was, That the Christians Explication of this Prophecy agrees perfectly well with *Jesus Christ*; and by Consequence, not misapplied by the *Evangelist*; and that, if it be taken in another Sense, it can have no reasonable Meaning in it: This clearly follows from the two first; for since it is impossible, that *Isaiab's* Son, or, indeed, any mortal Man,

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not God withal, could be understood by that Prophecy; nor could the *present Deliverance* of the Land be all that the Prophet meant by those high Qualities, which he ascribes to that wonderful Child: So that one must transcribe the greatest Part of the Book to particularize every Thing, that is foretold of him. Nor, could such *different Characters*, as the Prophet ascribes to him, be ever verified in any one, unless he was endowed with those Qualities that Jesus Christ had. On the one Hand, the Child that was to be given to us, was to be God with us, The mighty God, God himself that should come to save us, The Prince of Peace, The Father of Ages to come, The Rod of *Jesse*, who was to rule all Nations: These were the very Terms of the Prophecy. On the other Hand, what is said over and over again, of his spiritual Kingdom, of his being the Light of the *Gentiles*, and their Salvation to the Ends of the Earth, *Chap. xlix. 6.* of what he was to *suffer*, of his being *buffeted* and *spit* upon, *Chap. l. 6.* can never be applied to any one, unless to *Jesus Christ*. But, finally, what is said in the 53d Chapter, descends to so many Particulars of his *Paffion* and *Death*, that it looks more like a *Description* of some *past Fact*, than a Prophecy:

phesy: The whole Chapter is chiefly taken up with it; the principal Heads of which I will here transcribe for the Reader's Satisfaction. *Isa. liii. 1. & deinceps. Who hath believed our Reports? And to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry Gound: He hath no Form or Comeliness: And when we shall see him, no Beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of Men; a Man of Sorrow, and acquainted with Grief: And we hid as it were our Faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows: Yet we did esteem him stricken, and smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities: — And with his Stripes we are healed. — Ver. 8. For he was cut off out of the Land of the Living: — Ver. 12. He hath poured out his Soul unto Death: And he was numbred with the Transgressors, — he bore the Sins of many, and made Intercession for the Transgressors.* Now, such different Characters as these, can never agree with any other than *Jesus Christ*; and they agree perfectly well with him, to such an amazing Exactness, that nothing but the Spirit of God

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could have foretold it; nor any one, but who was sent by God, could have fulfilled it. He proved himself to be God with us, by such wonderful Works, as could not be performed but by the Power of God, as has been abundantly shewn; and his spiritual Kingdom, first or last, subjected to itself more than any Emperor of the World ever did; his Cross has triumphed, where the *Roman* Arms never could; he has freed us from the Slavery of Sin and Death, infinitely more hurtful to us than all the Tyrants of the Earth put together, and set us in the Liberty of the Children of God; he has truly borne our Sins and Iniquities upon himself, and by his Stripes he has made us whole; and lastly, by his Death and wonderful Resurrection, he has made his Rest or Sepulchre the most glorious as ever was. Wherefore it is manifest, that this Prophecy is so far from being misapplied by the Evangelist to Jesus Christ, or carrying the Face of an Objection against Christianity, that it is a most signal Testimony and Confirmation of that Religion.

§. V.

*The Corroborating Circumstances,
subsequent to the Coming of Je-
sus Christ.*

THESE Circumstances are, *first*, the Things foretold by Jesus Christ, of himself and his Church, so exactly fulfilled afterwards, that, according to Mr. Bayle's Remark, no human Wit or Policy could foresee them, or bring them to pass; as, the Manner of his own Death in all its Circumstances, *Mat.* xvi. 21. his Rising again from the Dead the third Day, *ibid.* the Calling and Conversion of the *Gentiles*, *Mat.* viii. 11, 12. xii. 18. *John* x. 16. and his drawing all the World after him by his being exalted on the Cross, *John* xii. 32. the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, according as we find by History, it really happened, *Mat.* xxiv. 2. *Mark* xiii. 2. *Mat.* xxiii. 38. To which we may add, the Prodigies which hindered the Temple's being rebuilt again, mentioned by *Ammianus Marcellinus*. See *Grotius, Lib. de ver. Rel. Chris.*

THE Propagation of the Gospel over all the Earth in its proper Time appointed by

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God; not only against all human Probability, but even Possibility, had not something more than human concurred in it; with infinite other Events foretold in the *New Testament*; the Authentickness of which no ancient Monuments can exceed, if any could come up to it: So that, if we deny the Veracity of the *New Testament*, as an ancient History only, we may as well deny all History whatsoever; if we allow it to be true, the Predictions are without Dispute.

SECONDLY, The Signs and Wonders performed by his Disciples after him, as he promised them they should do; and even greater than he himself did. Some of these are, Curing the Man lame from his Mother's Womb, in the Porch of *Saloman*, *Acts* iii. 6. the visible Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, and the new confirmed Christians, *Acts* viii. 15. x. 44. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. the dead Woman raised to Life by St. Peter, *Acts* ix. 40. his Delivery out of Prison by an Angel, *Acts* v. 19. the astonishing Death of *Annaniab* and *Saphira*, *Acts* v. 5. the wonderful Conversion of St. Paul, *Acts* ix. 3. with his Blindness and Recovery, *ib.* 18. the dead Youth raised by him, *Acts* xx. 9, 10. the Judgment upon *Elymas* the Sorcerer, *Acts* xiii.

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II. with innumerable others done in the Eyes of all the World, where their greatest Enemies were Witnesses, as well as their Friends; not to say any Thing of the wonderful Lives of the Saints and Martyrs in the first Ages of the Church; to deny all of which, a Man must be something more than incredulous. To which we may add, the Numbers of Believers in the chief Parts of the then known World, even in the Life-time of the Apostles, induced to it by what they heard, saw, and felt of the Virtue of the Word of God; of whom we may say, that every Believer was a Witness of the Truth.

THIRDLY, The Conversion of the World by a small, insignificant Company of illiterate Men, without any Views of *Interest* or *Policy*, or any visible Power, which ought to make it seem more wonderful in the Eyes of the Deists, than of any other People beside; no other Means being effectual with them but these. To which must be added some other Circumstances, which, they are also sensible, must have been a very forcible Hinderance to the Undertaking, *i. e.* that the World had then imbibed *Principles*, Point-blank contrary to what they were obliged to believe and practise: There were Prejudices of Infancy and Education with

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a Witness; the whole Posse of Priests of a different Interest, (very dreadful Adversaries) with all the Engines of Priestcraft and Religion, were set at Work to oppress them; the Passions of Men, armed with all the Incentives of Earth and Hell, fell upon them; a long continued Possession of unlimited Power endeavoured to crush them; the universal Laws of Nations and Kingdoms stood in their Way: In a Word, nothing could be imagined more hard to be effected, than the Conversion of the World in those Circumstances; and nothing more incapable of doing it, in all human Appearance, than the Means and Motives made use of to bring it to pass; that the Hand of God might appear in every Part of it: If the Deists will not be convinced, there was something more than human in it, let them try, with all their Policy and Interest, to do the like; let them rescue the World from Bigotry and Priestcraft, that their rational System may be established over Cheat and Imposture, then let them compare the Lives and Practices of their new Proselytes with the Apostles.

I CANNOT think any of them will be so unreasonable, as to make a serious Parallel between the Apostacy of *Mahomet*,
with

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with the vast Progress that Impostor made in the World, and the Conversion of it by the Ministers of the Gospel. To add something to what has been already said, concerning the pretended Miracles of that Apostate, it is evident, that *Mahomet's* first setting up was a mere *Depredation*, not a Conversion; begun by a Pack of Thieves and Vagabonds, carried on by downright Force, encouraged with all the Hopes of Rapine and Plunder, with the Allurements of Liberty and Pleasures, and still supported by the most brutal Tyranny: When, as the Spirit of the Gospel had nothing of this World in it, so its Champions and Followers had nothing of this World to assist them in the great Work they undertook: Their Victories were Persecutions, their Arms Patience, their Pleasures Self-Denials, their Encouragements Crosses, their Crowns Death.

FOURTHLY, As the Instruments of this Conversion, the Ways and Means employed to do it, and the astonishing Success just contrary to what it ought to have been, if there had been nothing but human in it, argues some superior Power in the Propagation of the Gospel; so the wonderful Effects it had upon the converted Christians, is no slender Confirmation of its Divine

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vine Original; I mean the wonderful Change and Reformation it caused in the World, turning Monsters of Men into as great Examples of Virtue and Sanctity; where the Proud and Haughty became as meek and humble as Lambs; the most Debauched and Profligate became Patterns of Temperance and Sobriety; where Honours were contemned, Pleasures despised; Riches trampled under Foot. In a Word, a new Law was stamped upon the Hearts of Men, changing the Face of the whole Earth: What Divine Efficacy was requisite to perform *this amazing Change*! What could the Deists have done with all their *heathen Morality*? Or, indeed, What could all their old *heathen Masters* do to effect such a Reformation in the Lives and Manners of Men, in Comparison of what Christianity did in a few Years? What sublime Thoughts must we have of Christianity, when we consider, that from the Time it began to flourish, instead of that brutal Ignorance, which overflowed the Face of the Earth, we see Knowledge and Learning, as well as common Humanity, encrease in Proportion with it? So that we may say, Men became more Men as they became Christians: Will the Deists call that Priestcraft too?

FIFTHLY,

FIFTHLY, Does not the Constancy of its Martyrs, the Glory of its Confessors, the Learning of its Doctors, the Divine Lives of its first Professors, deserve a Share of our Admiration in this great Work? What can we say of so many Thousands, who laid down their Lives with Joy, in Testification of the Truth of what they believed? What Inducement could they have, but irrefragable Conviction, for what they did and suffered? What can we think, when we find among these, not blind Enthusiasts, not miserable, hypocritical Wretches, who for a little Pelf, or some worse Motives, would mangle themselves like so many Furies; but Men of the best Sense, profound Learning, solid Virtue and Sanctity, of their respective Ages? What a Madness is it to suspect, that so many learned Men, I may say the chief Ornaments of every Age, should lay down their Lives, or rather lose all their Senses at once, as they must certainly have done, if they were not absolutely convinced of the Truth of the Gospel, to embrace one of the greatest Impostures, in the Deists Opinion, that ever was?

LASTLY, The Doctrine and Principles of Christianity are a great Confirmation, that its Institution was from God: What
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can be imagined more pure, or more divine, than its Morality? More compleat in all its Parts? More extensive to the universal Duties of Life, if Men would but live up to them? All the Philosophy of the Ancients, all their fine Maxims, were nothing but barren, fruitless Speculations, when we come to compare them with the Divine Maxims of the Gospel. What Power could ever inculcate the Force of these Obligations, so efficaciously as Christianity has done? What Care does it take, as far as in it lies, that all its Professors should be holy, as its Maxims are holy? What Motives can be more noble, than those it proposes to induce Men to their respective Duties? What elevated Notions does it give us of the Supreme Deity? What just and rational Ideas of eternal Beatitude? What encouraging Hopes of a happy Immortality? In fine, it is not in the Power of Man to invent so compleat, or even so rational a System of Religion, taken all together, as Christianity is; and by Consequence, they must act irrationally, who refuse to comply with the Duties of it.

It is true, several of the *Credenda* it proposes, as was observed, are hard to conceive by natural Reason; this we allow:
But

But can those Difficulties be put in Balance with the accumulative Proofs for the Whole of it? Shall some speculative Difficulties take Place of the best attested Facts, that ever were? If those *Credenda* are incomprehensible in themselves, yet it is ten Times harder to comprehend, how such Things could be done, and such invincible Proofs could concur to confirm a Lye: Beside, the Deists know, or ought to know, that God, whose Law Jesus Christ came to promulgate, is infinitely above, and entirely incomprehensible to human Capacity; no Wonder, therefore, the Things we are taught to believe concerning him, should also be incomprehensible: Does it not follow likewise, that none but he, who knows the Counsels of God, was fit to be our Instructor therein? Yet further, put the Case the Revelation were absolutely true, *i. e.* allowed to be so by the Deists, all we could expect, would be to know, that the Attributes of God are such and such, not to comprehend *how* they are so, since a finite Capacity will never be able to comprehend Infinity: For it is evident by natural Reason, that the Perfections of God, his Attributes, and the Things we are to believe concerning his infinite Being and Will, must be incom-

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comprehensible with respect to us. This Consideration alone ought to go a great Way with any rational Man; since the only Recourse we can have in this Point, must be to the *Authority declaring those Credenda* to us; which seems to be so certain, that none but Men abandoned to their own Passions can call it in Question. Could the Deists but bring the hundredth Part of the Arguments against Christianity, as there are for it, What a Field of Eloquence would there be to enlarge upon? And what Flourishes of Rhetorick might we expect?

FROM what has been said, it is certain, 1st, That the Christian Religion, upon the Whole, instead of being an Imposition on natural Reason, is the *best grounded*, and the most rational System, that can be imagined. 2^{dly}, The Proofs for Christianity ought to be looked upon by all Men, especially by the Deists, as the most natural and convincing: Why so? Because they are not drawn from mere barren Speculations, but from Notoriety of Fact, recorded and delivered down to us by the most unquestionable Testimonies, the most authentick Histories, and confirmed by the most amazing Circumstances, antecedent, concurrent with it, and subsequent to it,

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corroborating all, and every Part of it. 3dly, That all the Truths proposed by the Divine Author of it, even the *most mysterious*, are evidently credible in regard of all; because they rely upon the most natural Arguments, that the Authority, which recommends them, came from God.

SECTION IV.

Objections against Christianity answered.

BEFORE we enter upon the Objections our modern Infidels bring against the Christian Religion, some natural Observations occur, which will appear very just to an impartial Examiner. The first is, That mere speculative Difficulties are not to be put in Balance with Matter of Fact. For Example, One may very well suppose there are such Things as Men in the World; that these Men converse with one another, walk, move from Place to Place, &c. and that a Person would be begged for a Madman, who should in earnest deny the Reality of all this. Now, there

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there are incomprehensible Difficulties, as; indeed, in every Thing in Nature beside, and insuperable Arguments in Speculation against the Possibility of any local Motion; yet, Who would believe, he never moved out of one Place in his Life? This Example is very applicable in the present Case; because the Proofs for Christianity being drawn from Matter of Fact the most authentically attested, and the Arguments of the Deists for the most Part being nothing but mere speculative Difficulties, about some seeming Impossibility, or Incongruity of some of the Mysteries of Christianity, it is evident, it ought to make no more Impression on our Judgments, than the Arguments against the Possibility of Motion ought to make me believe, I never walked about my Room in my Life.

A SECOND Observation is, That the proper Way to argue against the Institution of Christianity, were to urge one of these two Points, *viz.* Either to disprove the Matter of Fact recorded of Jesus Christ; or, if admitted, to shew they can be no Proof, that the Author of that Religion came from God. But do the Deists do this? No; they only beat about the Bush, bringing some invidious Parallels, bickering at the Difficulties of some of our Mysteries,

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Myſteries, and dropping ſome ſly Innuendo's, as if it might be otherwiſe; but leave the main Points in Queſtion in their full Force.

A THIRD Obſervation is, That when the Object is acknowledged by both Sides to be incomprehenſible, and the Diſpute is about the Authority for it, not about the Object itſelf; it were not only unreaſonable, but ridiculous, to bring the Incomprehenſibility of the Object for an Argument againſt the Authority. It is on Account of the invincible Proofs for the Divine Miſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, that we believe the Myſteries he taught.

A FOURTH Obſervation conſequent to this, and what has partly been touched upon before, is, That whereas not only Revelation, but even natural Reaſon teaches us, that all Things immediately belonging to an infinite Being muſt be infinitely ſuperior to human Capacity; it were unreaſonable to diſpute the Belief of them on that Account; and by Conſequence, that when the Authority for our Belief is ſufficient, the Myſteries it propoſes, though they may be incomprehenſible, cannot be diſputed, without acting againſt *Reaſon*, as well as againſt Religion.

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WHOEVER has had any Conversation with the Deists, or with their Books, will easily see the Necessity of the first three Observations, and the Force of the Fourth is very well known to several, who heretofore would have been looked upon, as leaning towards Deism, I mean the *Unitarians*, *Latitudinarians*, *Toland*ers, &c. who knowing, that, if on the one Hand the Authority be but sufficient, the Mysteries it proposes cannot be denied; and on the other Hand, not being able to deny the Divine Authority of the Christian Religion, that they might elude the Belief of those Mysteries, pretend that Christianity never taught them; as the Trinity for Instance, the Incarnation of the Son of God, &c.^a So that, according to those Gentlemen, these Mysteries ought not to be objected against Christianity in general, but only against a particular Part of it; of whom it may very well be said, that by endeavouring to avoid these Difficulties, they fall into greater: Since it seems much harder

^a N. B. Though the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, original Sin, and some other Mysteries, are Points of the Christian Faith; yet they do not so properly belong to the Dispute against the Free-thinkers; because they deny the Divine Mission of Jesus Christ, even as sent by God; and look upon Christianity, as a mere Fable. Though it is so certain in Fact, that they may as well look upon all past Histories, as Fables also.

harder to be a Christian, and disbelieve those Mysteries, than not to believe Christianity, because it teaches them; and I could almost believe, if the Deists would be Christians, they would think themselves obliged to believe them, as well as the other Parts of it. However, since the Antimysterians have a Mind to make them pass for Matter of Dispute between Christians and Christians, not between Christians and Infidels, they may be omitted at present, as not so properly belonging to this Controversy; since the *Socinians* themselves pretend to be Christians.

WE ought to observe, *lastly*, That a great many, I may say the most difficult Arguments the Deists make use of against Christianity; for Example, the Permission of Evil, with the dismal Consequences attending it; the Inequality of the Goods and Evils of this Life; those against Providence, future Rewards and Punishments, &c. have been already answered in the first and second Part: Neither do they so directly attack Christianity, as the very Belief of a God; and by Consequence, must be solved by the Deists themselves; besides those that fell in with the Proofs for Christianity, and were answered by them, as we came along. So that it only remains

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to answer the Objections, that immediately attack Revelation.

OBJECTION I. Christianity, say they, teaches us several Things inconsistent with Reason; as, *1st*, That all Mankind should be damned for the Eating of an Apple. *2^{dly}*, That this terrible Lot should depend on the Levity and Curiosity of a silly Woman. *3^{dly}*, That all the ensuing Race of Men should be lost eternally, at least, till Jesus Christ came, except the *Jews*, for Faults they never committed, nor could avoid. *4^{thly}*, That God should foresee these Misfortunes, and not hinder them, when it lay in his Power to do it. *5^{thly}*, That he should be, not only so rigorously just, but even so revengeful and cruel, as to extend his Wrath upon the Works of his Hands for so many Generations. *6^{thly}*, That he should exact such hard Terms of Reconciliation, as the Christians describe; not to say any Thing of the Indignity of sending his only Son to do the Work. *7^{thly}*, Beside other innumerable Improbabilities, Christianity, say they, quite unmans us, in making us shut out the Light of Reason in what we believe.

ANSWER I. Though these common and obvious Objections of our modern Infidels shall be answered, as to every individual

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Part of them; yet, there are some general Heads, which ought not to be omitted; and will shew, that these Gentlemen, or any one else, who imagine these Objections to have any great Force in them, are strangely carried away with first Appearances. Some Parts of this Objection are directly false, as will be seen, when we come to the Particulars; others are invidiously stated, and will bear a very rational Explication, when they are put in their true Light; others are real Mysteries of our Religion, and depend on the Authority declaring them. But, in fine, the Force and Intent of these Objections is directly destroyed by the invincible Proofs for Christianity; if these speculative Difficulties could be put in Balance with them, why then, indeed, they may have some Weight; but if they cannot, they are, in Effect, answered already by those Proofs. In the next Place, Do not the Deists, by such Objections, make themselves Judges of the Ends and Designs of God, and seem to prescribe to infinite Wisdom, the Ways and Means he ought to make use of in regard of his Creatures? If this be unreasonable, these Objections must be so too. 3^{dly}, If the Authority, declaring what is of Faith in these Points, be suffi-

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cient, it is unreasonable to deny them, on Account that they are above our Reason; since whatever belongs to Infinity is so. We know, likewise, that the Ends and Designs of infinite Wisdom must be just and holy in every Part, though we may not comprehend them; and that his Judgments must be infinitely superior to our scanty Speculations. *4thly*, That it is taking the Thing by the wrong Handle to object any Thing against the Authority, which the Authority directly proves. These Reasons in general, with the unquestionable Proofs for Christianity already alledged, and needless to be repeated here, manifestly shew, that though the above-mentioned Difficulties may seem a little hard at first Appearance, when they are solitarily considered; yet, when they come to be compared with the opposite Proofs for Christianity, they can have no Weight with them, as being scarce any Thing but Speculations against plain Matter of Fact; nor, by Consequence, ought to create the least Doubt in those, who have any Regard to Reason, as well as Religion. However, I hope, when they come to be examined in particular, they will not seem so very insolvable.

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ANSWER

ANSWER II. to the Particulars, *viz.* That all Mankind should be liable to Death, for our first Parents eating the forbidden Fruit: This is one of the Mysteries of Christianity, I own, but proved to be true, by all the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, and confirmed by all the Arguments already alledged: Neither is there any Absurdity, or Impossibility in the Case: For was not Man obliged by all Ties whatsoever to *obey* his *Maker*? And had not God a *Right* and Power to lay his Commands upon him, in what he *pleased*? Both to try his Obedience, and keep him always in Subjection, lest, as we find afterwards he did, he should think himself, as it were, independent of his God; if so, What Absurdity was there in chusing the forbidden Fruit instead of any Thing else? Cannot God try our Obedience, in whatever he thinks fit? Shall we, poor Worms, pretend to prescribe to Omnipotence? Besides, Was not Fruit, at that Time, the great Support of Life, and made up their greatest Delight? I fancy, if the Deists were forbid the Juice of the Grape, they would look upon it, as a Matter of Moment: And why not in any other Fruit? In short, the less the Command was, the more it enhances his Disobedience,

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ence, who would not obey his God in so small a Matter, after he had received so many Benefits from him. I hope, every one sees, that this Part of the Objection deserves no further Answer.

As to the next Instance, of making the terrible Lot depend on the Levity and Curiosity of a Woman, it turns upon a false Supposition; since it was the *Man's Fault*, that incurred the Penalty: Neither had his Posterity been punished, had *she alone* been the Offender. So that here is a great deal of Dust thrown into People's Eyes; and on a false, as well as weak Foundation; for as the Woman was more easy to be drawn into the Snare, than the Man, so, a Woman may be as capable of giving Temptation, as any Thing else. But, say they, the Story of the Serpent looks a little odd. Answer, That it does not become Persons of Sense to treat such a Subject in so ludicrous a Manner; but if you take away the Sneers and Sarcasms of Free-thinkers, you strip them of all their Arguments. What, therefore, must we think of them, when they scoff at a Subject the most sacred for its Antiquity, recorded by the most venerable History in the World, confirmed by all the Miracles, Wonders, and Prodigies, both of the *Old*
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and *New Testament*, by all the Arguments that prove the Christian Religion, that a Man must renounce common Sense, and all the Possibility of proving any past Facts in Nature, to disbelieve it; yet this is the Case, because an Account does not square with our scanty Conceptions, and that too in the Designs of infinite Wisdom, we must shut our Eyes to all the Proofs, that Miracles and History, built upon innumerable Testimonies, can give us: If this be to follow Reason, all the World hitherto has been in the Dark. However, I hope the pious Reader will give me Leave to answer them a Word or two in their own Way. I presume the Deists would not have had the Devil to tempt *Eve* in his own Shape; that would not have been a very prevailing Object. If Satan had appeared in a human Shape, *Eve* knew there were none of that Kind, but *Adam* and herself: They saw Animals of different Species, Why, therefore, might not he appear in the Shape of one, as well as another? In fine, every one knows, that *Moses* by the Serpent really meant the Devil, the subtle Tempter, the old Serpent, &c. Put the Case, therefore, he makes use of the Serpent to express, that the Devil tempted her very *artfully*, then that

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that rhetorical Sneer will be quite lost; not that there is any Need of such a Supposition, nor, indeed, of saying any more to that Part of the Objection.

As to the third Instance, *viz.* That all the ensuing Race of Men, for so many Ages, except one Family, should be damned for Faults they never committed themselves, nor could avoid. Answer, This is partly false, and partly misrepresented, as we shall see by and by: In the first Place, the Christians piously believe, there were several very holy Men before the Coming of Jesus Christ, who were not *Jews*; and more might have been so, had they made use of the Lights and Helps, that were offered them: This is meant of the Adults from the very Fall of *Adam*, as *Abel*, *Enos*; *Job* after the Flood, &c. Why might not others have been holy, but by their own Faults? 2dly, Whatever Punishment was inflicted upon *Adam*, and his Posterity, it shews, how enormous Sin must be in the Sight of God; but even here natural Reason teaches us, that Man alone was responsible for the Consequences of it. He was told and forewarned of them, over and above his Duty to obey, and to take care to prevent them; they were laid fairly before him; he saw what he was to expect.

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On the other Hand, in Case of his Obedience, he had the encouraging Assurance, and Reward of eternal Life for himself, and *all his Posterity*; as he was to be responsible for his Descendants, so he was made capable by his Obedience, of entailing, as far as was required on his Side, eternal Life upon them without their personal Deserts; so that if any of his Posterity had cut off the Entail, if I may say so, in regard of himself, by his own personal Fault, he alone would have suffered by it: Who was, therefore, to blame but himself?

WELL, But, may they say, to cast the fatal Lot of all upon one Chance, if the Term may be allowed; or, for the whole Race of Mankind to be punished for a Fault they never committed, What can we think? Why, that God is infinitely just and holy on the one Hand; neither will he be derided; and infinitely good and merciful on the other, in designing and providing a Redemption for us, from that Moment, for all our Transgressions. But there seems to be a Fallacy in those Words, *for a Fault they never committed*: It is true, they never committed that Fault actually, but were guilty of it originally; by which
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the Christians mean, that God having forewarned *Adam*, that if he committed such a Fault, both he, and all his Race, should be deprived of original Justice: He did commit the Fault, and incurred the Penalty. This will be further explained afterwards. It was shewn just now, that Man alone was responsible for all the Consequences of his Sin, and might have rendered his Descendants free from that original Guilt by his Obedience, without their personal Concurrence. Life and Death was proposed to him with all the Conditions of it, Where was then the Injustice? But then, to shew, that God Almighty's Mercy is above all his Works, Were not his Descendants to be made happy, for what in Person they never could deserve? Do not the Christians also teach, that as they were made guilty by the Fault of one, so they were all *redeemed* by the Merits of one? I mean Jesus Christ. In *View* of whose Merits we piously believe, there were Remedies provided for that Guilt, even from the very first Descendants of *Adam*; so good and merciful was God, notwithstanding he had been so heinously offended. Do not they believe, that *Adam* himself was pardoned, as to the next Life, which is the main Point of all, notwithstanding the
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Grievousness of his Offence? Could not he have taught his Children, as without doubt he did endeavour to inculcate it to them, had they hearkened to, and followed his Advice, to *reconcile* themselves to their God by Repentance, by their Faith and Obedience to him? Could not those Children have taught their Descendants, and so on, till the Price of their *Redemption*, in its proper Time appointed by God, should be paid? In View of which Redemption, their Sins, as *Adam* was put in Hopes of immediately after his Fall, were to be forgiven. Beside, it is probable, the *Jews* from *Abraham* downwards, had the Guilt of original Sin taken off by the Sacrament of Circumcision; neither can we well doubt, but that from the Days of our first Parents there were Ways and Means, if duly applied, left for their Descendants to wipe away their Sins; but still in View of a future Redeemer, Why, therefore, will the Deists always look on the Back-Side of the Scene?

THESE Considerations, if seriously attended to, are sufficient to vindicate God's Justice, and even magnify his Mercy, as to that Part of the Objection which regards original Sin; which is the main Stress of the Objection; beside the Evidence

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dence which natural Reason gives, that God must be just in all his Ways, though we may not comprehend his Motives: Neither is the Belief of original Sin so totally mysterious, and so hard to reconcile with natural Reason, as the Deists would have us believe; it is a Mystery, we own, but confirmed and established by all the Proofs for Christianity; but original Sin being a Privation of original Justice for Disobedience, Where is the Injustice, if the Offender was forewarned of it? Further, if we consider on the one Hand, the manifold Miseries of this mortal Life, with that dismal Chain of innumerable Evils, both natural and moral, to which we are all subject: And on the other Hand, when we reflect on the infinite Goodness and Justice of God, whom we cannot conceive to have permitted these Misfortunes to have befallen his Creatures, unless in Punishment of some Fault, as, in Effect, they are both Misfortunes and Punishments: What can we think in this Case, unless we presuppose some Fault from the very first Rise of our Nature, for which these Punishments were inflicted? And since these Misfortunes or Penalties, call them what you please, are real Matter of Fact, the Deists must account for them,

them, as well as the Christians; let them, therefore, do it better than they do.

WHAT the Deists may further urge in this Part of the Objection, is about Infants dying without Baptism in the new Law, or before the new Law, without having any other Remedy applied to them, by which that Guilt might be taken away: For as for the Adult, who were come to the perfect Use of Reason, it is a clear Case they might justly be punished for all Faults and Sins, both against Faith and Morals, which they might, and ought to have avoided; so that nothing but invincible Ignorance could excuse them. And can any one doubt, but if *Adam's* Descendants, from Father to Son, had imitated his Repentance, God would not have had Mercy on them? But still in View of their future Redeemer. But as for Infants, though some Christians, as well as others, have some Notions, that are a little shocking, it is not a determined Point, whether they suffer any Pain of Sense or Uneasiness by their Loss; or, indeed, that they are even sensible of it; which Sense would certainly be a grievous Torment: Only they will never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, nor enjoy that Glory to which their Nature in *Adam* was elevated; but will
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always be deprived of the Sight of God, and the Bliss of the Just: Now, put the Case that Man had been created in a mere State of Nature; or, according to the Schools, *in Statu Naturæ puræ*, without such an *Elevation*; in which State they would never have known God, as the Author of Grace and Glory, but only as the Author of *Nature*; and by Consequence, would never have enjoyed his supernatural *Vision*; which is a Supposition the Deists of all People, will acknowledge to be possible by natural Reason: If so, What worse Condition will Infants dying in original Sin be in, than if they had been created without such an *Elevation*? Why, as a Person born to a great Estate, but never enjoyed it, or knew of it, and one who never had, or was born to any; bating the Inequality of the Goods lost, especially when we suppose no Sense, or even Knowledge of the Loss; which, I say, is not a determined Point, with respect to such Infants: By Consequence, there is nothing so very shocking, or against Justice, in their dying in original Sin, and being deprived of the Sight of God for it; when, as I said, they have no Sense of their Loss: Which very Sense of their Loss would be a most grievous Torment; and the Generally of
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the best Divines hold, that they have no *Pæna sensus*, no sensible Pain. But does not this take off from the Care all Persons ought to have, that their Children should not die without Baptism? No, certainly, unless Heaven, with the Enjoyment of God in a never ending Bliss and Glory, be not worth our Care; if it be, as certainly it is, it deserves our utmost Solitude, and our greatest Acknowledgments for such a Benefit: But taking original Sin in the most difficult Part, if there was a Redemption prepared for it from the Beginning, and Means, by Faith and Repentance, to wipe it away; it magnifies the Mercy of God; neither must we blame his Rigour, if some were deprived of original Justice by their Parents Fault, or Neglect; but ought to believe, there may be just Reasons in infinite Wisdom for so doing.

HENCE, I believe, the Reader will see, that the foregoing Objection, with all the Instances hitherto urged by the Deists, are not so irreconcilable with natural Reason, as they would make People imagine; but when we take along with us the Considerations of the innumerable Miseries and Punishments human Nature has hitherto groaned under, very justly presupposing

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some original Fault for which they are inflicted; with all the Proofs for revealed Religion, they must have no Weight with Men of any Candor and Sincerity, as well as Penetration and Judgment.

THEN, for the fourth, fifth, and sixth Part of the Objection, *i. e.* Why God did not prevent those Misfortunes? Why he inflicted so severe a Punishment? And exacted such hard Terms of Reconciliation? They have been abundantly answered already, in the Objections against the Existence of Evil, which the Deists must grant, and that too attended with suitable Punishments, abstracting from Revelation, (which see); as likewise those against Providence. So that the same Questions may, in a great Measure, be put to the Deists; beside, is not this subjecting the Designs of infinite Wisdom to the scanty Notions of every impertinent Examiner? Is it not prescribing Ways and Means to the Almighty? One might much more reasonably ask, Why will Men, by their repeated Sins, draw eternal Punishments on their own Heads? Again, when infinite Majesty is offended, it belongs to him to demand what Satisfaction, and prescribe what Terms of Reconciliation he pleases. And since he has assured us, by his own unquestionable Authority,

thority, that such a Satisfaction was necessary; and on the other Hand, it is evident, he can do nothing, but what is *holy* and *just*, it is infinitely more agreeable to right Reason, humbly to acquiesce, and submit to his Divine Appointments, than to render ourselves unworthy of that *Redemption* by our *Infidelity*. The sending his only Son to blot out the Condemnation, which lay against us, both shews the Heinousness of Sin in regard of the Person offended; and magnifies his infinite Love, Mercy, and Goodness, towards us: For which no Tongue can render him sufficient Thanks: Besides, he was to be our Law-giver, our Teacher, and Instructor in those Things, that belonged to God, than whom none could be more proper; since none but the only begotten Son, who is in the Bosom of his eternal Father, could know the Counsels of God; by Consequence, he was the most proper to illuminate that gross Darkness, that was spread over the Face of the whole Earth, and to triumph over the Errors and Wickedness of a World inveterate in Malice, by the Efficacy of his Divine Authority.

WHEN they say, that Christianity unmans us, by making us shut out the Light of Reason, in what we believe. Answer,

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First, This is both impertinent to the Question, and false in Terms; and were it not for the Satisfaction of others, deserves no Answer. Is it to shut out the Light of Reason, to follow the *best established Authority*, that ever was? Is it to unman ourselves, to believe the certain Voice of God? Can any Thing in Reason be more certain, than what God declares? Or, Can any Thing be more ascertained to us, than that he has declared it? So that to believe the most incomprehensible Mysteries of Christianity, is, in reality, to act according to the best established Dictates of right Reason.

SECONDLY, It is Free-thinking, not Christianity, that unmans us, when it would make us shut out the very Light of Nature, confound Good and Evil, and put us, so far, on the Level with Beasts; that Persons ought to be ashamed of owning themselves Masters of Reason, and establish Tenets so diametrically contrary to it; whose Tendency saps the Foundation of all Nature; and, were they to be followed, would involve the Universe in Blood and Confusion.

THIRDLY, The Christians deny, that any of their Mysteries are really contradictory to right Reason; on the contrary, they

they would be very bad Christians, who should assert, that the most sublime Mysteries contain any real Contradiction in them ^a. We will grant them to be incomprehensible, and superior to Reason, but not repugnant to it; which those, who are acquainted with Metaphysics, know to be two different Things: But, in Effect, all this is only to puzzle the Cause, and to draw People off from the Certainty of Revelation to the Difficulty of the Things revealed; which is changing the true State of the Question. In fine, since these Gentlemen are afraid of unmanning themselves by acknowledging any Thing superior to Reason: One might ask them, What is there in Nature, that. is not so?

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^a N. B. Though this Treatise does not undertake to explain the particular Mysteries of Christianity, but to prove the Truth of them; nevertheless, the Deists take some of them quite differently from what they ought to be taken, as the Trinity, the Incarnation, our Saviour's being born of a Virgin, &c. The Christians do not hold, that one God may be three Gods, or three Persons, one Person; but that the Divine Nature, though one in itself, is of such Perfection, that it may subsist in three distinct Persons; and that one Divine Person might assume human Nature to it: Neither do they hold, that God in his Divine Nature was incarnate, suffered, &c. but in the assumed human Nature. As to his being born of a Virgin, surely, if God could create Man and Woman out of nothing, he could produce a human Nature without the Co-operation of Man. They are Mysteries, we own, as to the Manner, but proved to be true by all the foregoing Arguments.

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They had better exercise their exuberant Wits in the School of Nature, where the least Atom will give them Employment enough, and not pretend to censure Heaven, till they know what passes upon Earth.

OBJECTION II. The Christians, say they, might have some Plea for Divine Revelation, if they could prove it to be universal, either as to Time or Place; but neither of these can be proved; not as to Time, for according to their general Way of computing, the better Half of the World's Duration was passed, before Christ appeared; nor as to the Place, because first he only appeared in a little Corner of the Earth, as good as separated by their Laws from the rest of the World. In the next Place, even now-a-Days, scarce one Third of the Universe ever heard of it; or at least, do not believe it. Can any one, therefore, persuade himself, say they, that the universal Father of Heaven and Earth, infinite in Goodness and Mercy, should have abandoned the whole World, except the Kingdom of *Jewry*, for so many thousand Years under the Guilt of eternal Damnation^b, without letting them know, what they were to do, to avoid such a dreadful Mis-

^b See this answered before.

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Misfortune, or even being sensible of it? Were not other Nations as capable of Salvation, as the *Jews*? Is there any Exception of Persons with God? This Argument is so obvious and natural, that it is objected to their Missioners, by the ignorant *Indians* themselves.

ANSWER. This Objection has a great deal more of Shew, than Substance; and may make some Impression on those, who are not acquainted with, or will not attend to the invincible Proofs for Christianity; but none at all, on those who seriously consider the Force and Weight of those Proofs. As to the Universality, therefore, of the Revelation where the greatest Force of their Argument lies, What is all that to the Deists Purpose? Let them take it either as to Time or Place. What if Jesus Christ only appeared at one certain Time, or in one certain Place? Provided he were but sent by God, Are we not as much obliged to believe him, as if he had been sent from the Beginning of the World? I presume, God is to be *obeyed*, whenever he notifies his Will to us: This Universality, therefore, is only a Flourish of the Deists Rhetorick; the Inference it should bring along with it, dwindles into nothing: Then, for Jesus Christ's appearing in one

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only Part of the World, or beginning his Divine Mission in the Land of *Jewry*, one must look through the Deists Opticks to see what Hurt this can do Christianity; sure they do not mean, that he should have appeared in all Parts of the Earth at the same Time! If he was to appear but in one Place at the same Time, Why might he not begin in *Jewry*, as well as in another Place; or to those Persons first, to whom were trusted the Oracles of God? But, say they, why did he stay so long? Or why did he prefer one People before another? Before this very humble and pertinent Question deserves an Answer, one might ask them, Why he did not make the Deists as great Savages, as ever were upon the new-found Continent; if such Questions were proper in so serious a Subject.

THE Answer, therefore, is this: It is evident, *first*, That the Coming, or not Coming of Jesus Christ at one Time more than another; or his Appearing in one Place more than another, can be no Argument of itself against the Divine Authority of his Mission. *2dly*, That the rebellious Race of Mankind could not merit his Coming, even when he did. *3dly*, That he did not prefer the *Merits* of any one

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Generation, or any one Nation, to another, for his Coming at all; unless as they were the Descendants of his more faithful Servants. *4thly*, That though his actual Coming, as to the Time, was not universal, yet the *Merits* of his future Redemption had their Force and Efficacy from the Beginning of the World. *5thly*, Mens actual Sins rendered them inexcusable for all they suffered, till their Redemption was actually paid: For since the first Man being made sensible of his Fault, with the dismal Consequences of it; having also sufficient Light and Knowledge given him of his *Redeemer to come*; together with the Ways and Means by which his Posterity might have reconciled themselves to their Creator, in View of that future Redemption: Without all Doubt he imparted to his immediate Descendants, the absolute Necessity there was of Faith and Repentance; in which they might, and ought to have instructed their Descendants and Posterity downwards, till their blessed Redeemer was to come: But did they do this? No; for all Flesh had corrupted their Ways; their Wickedness vindicated the Justice of God to all the World, and convinced them of the absolute Necessity of his Grace and Mercy. And I wish the
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Wickedness of some Men does not still render them unworthy of that plentiful Redemption, which, when the Fullness of Time was come, was actually paid for them, though, by their own Fault, not applied to them.

As for the Numbers of Men, and Parts of the World, as yet either ignorant, or unworthy of this same Redemption; since, as was mentioned before, Jesus Christ was not to appear in all Places at once, so the Gospel could not naturally be propagated in all Parts at the same Time, for the same Reason; or any faster than Men could convey themselves thither, Circumstances and Obstacles considered: Though the Mercy of God has been so great, that, even to a Miracle, the Gospel has been, some Time or other, either received or notified to the greatest Part of the habitable Earth; so that, if it be unknown, it is to those, that perish by their own Fault, that it is unknown.

If they urge further, that, according to the Christians System, God left all the rest of the World in the Dark, except the Nation of the *Jews*; which, in Effect, was but one Family, and that too, in all Appearance, the most unworthy of his Graces of all he could have chosen. Now, Is
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it credible, say they, that God should be thus partial to Mankind? Or that Revelation should be necessary for the Salvation of all, when it was couped up among an obscure Race of People, almost unknown to all the World beside?

ANSWER. 1st, That God, and the Law of Nature in general, might have been known to all. 2^{dly}, That the Nation of the *Hebrews* was not chosen of God, till the rest of the World had rendered themselves almost Monsters of Nature by the most horrid Abominations. 3^{dly}, That the Origin of that particular Family was not far off the World's *second Infancy*, and not so unknown to others, but that they might, at the Beginning, have learned the Worship of the true God from them, or from their own common Ancestors. 4^{thly}, That the *Jews* were allowed by their Law to receive Profelytes. 5^{thly}, That although God made Choice of that Family, of which their future Redeemer should be born according to the Flesh; and though they were distinguished by a particular Law, yet that did not exempt the rest of the World from the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, but was rather an Example to put the rest in mind of their Duty. Neither, 6^{thly}, were all other Nations

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tions so entirely abandoned, as the Objection would insinuate; since there were a great many Occasions by which the first of all Nations might have had a sufficient Knowledge of their Duty; as from the first and common Parent of all, or from those of his Descendants, who remained pious and just till the Time of the Deluge; then immediately after the Deluge, questionless *Noah* took Care to instruct his Family; whose immediate Descendants likewise might have instructed theirs, and so on. 7thly, Though Men began to spread over the Earth, yet all the Remains we have ever had since, of History, Tradition, Invention of Arts and Sciences, confirm to us, that the World came from very small Beginnings, that it has been propagated from the Eastern Parts; and the neighbouring Provinces round about *Palestine* might have been called all the World: The first Empires and Kingdoms known to History, and credible Tradition, were established in the East; the first Colonies were sent from those Parts; neither can we trace the World by any Remains and Monuments, that are not entirely fabulous, any higher than the Scripture Account. 8thly, Soon after Colonies began to enlarge, God Almighty raised

raised up holy Men from Time to Time, by whom they might have been reminded of their Duty, as the Grand-children of *Noah*, *Abraham*, and his Family among the *Chaldeans*; and after his Removal, the most Part of his Life he was a Sojourner among the *Gentiles*; *Melchisedech*, King of *Salem*, older than *Abraham*, Priest of the most high God, and presumed to be a *Gentile*. The Patriarch *Job*, with his Friends and their Families, who were a Sort of petty Kings, and who, as we may see by what is recorded of them, particularly *Job*, had not only the Knowledge of the true God, but were Men of very sublime Penetration in that Respect. Then for *Egypt*, so well known to the ancient World, they might have learned of *Abraham*, of *Jacob*, of *Joseph*, of *Moses*, with the Children of *Israel* dwelling in the Midst of them; as *Jethro* joined to them afterwards, might have taught his Countrymen. The *Cananites*, with the other Nations, through which the Children of *Israel* passed, one would think, might have been taught better Things, by the Wonders and Prodigies performed in the Midst of them. The People of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, who trafficked over the known Parts of the World; from whence so many Colonies

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nies were sent abroad, knew very well, if not long before that Time, as is most probable, that *David* and *Solomon* worshipped the true God; then, if we return to the first Empires of the World, and bring them lower downwards, the *Assyrians* were near Neighbours to the *Jews*, among whom afterwards the latter were carried captive, and exercised their Religion among them; and the ten Tribes, wherever they were dispersed, without Doubt did at the Beginning carry some Knowledge of the true Worship of God along with them; for the Neglect of which they were so severely punished; though in Time they might all run down with the common Current of Corruption. The first Kings of the *Medes* and *Persians* knew the *Jews*, and were known to that Nation; as likewise the *Grecian* Kings, *Alexander*, and his Successors, if not long before. The *Romans* also, towards the Beginning of their Commonwealth, knew, and were in Alliance with the *Jews*. Not to mention the broad Hints, which the ancient Fables give us of the Beginning of the World, as set down by *Moses*; nor the Belief of one Supreme Deity, which the most ancient and wisest of the heathen World seem to acknowledge in the Rem-

nants of their Writings. So that God, even according to the Christians, was not so very partial, as the Deists would make him to be. It is true, scarce any of these Nations complied with this Worship, or this Knowledge of the true God: But does that either render them excusable, or God blameable? What dismal Effects and Consequences an affected Ignorance, supine Sloth, vicious Inclinations, and repeated Sins, may have on Men, and even Nations, is a Subject rather to be lamented, than any Thing else. That Persons may be blinded, and yet inexcusable, the Deists are a living Example.

OBJECTION III. The Books of the *Old* and *New Testament* contain several Things, that appear almost incredible to Men of Sense: With what a Lumber of Ceremonies is the old Law stuffed? Not only unworthy of God, but of any human Law-giver; but now the new Law is founded on the old: *Ergo*,

ANSWER. Such bold and bare-faced Assertions are so common with our Adversaries, that, I hope, the pious Reader will not be surprized at them; particularly, when we consider, that this is making ourselves Judges of what is, or is not proper for God to prescribe to Men. It is
certain,

certain, nothing in the old or new Law can seem incredible, even to Reason, if we consider the wonderful *Credentials* those venerable Writings bring along with them to confirm their Authority; which are, in short, such Marks of Veracity, both intrinsic and external, as no History in the World could ever pretend to; and which render them the most authentick Records, that can be produced: It is this the Deists ought to endeavour to disprove, not to be cavilling and picking at Bits and Scraps, wherever they can lay hold of them; which, in Effect, make very little to their Purpose: So, without entering into the Particulars, too long for this Treatise, it may very well be said, that if the new Law be founded on the old, it also bears Testimony for it; and by Consequence, till the Deists can disprove the new Law, they are doing nothing to the Purpose; whereas, if the Authority of the new Law be unquestionable, as without Doubt it is, that of the old Law must be so too, as bearing Testimony to one another. In fine, the Christians are so far from acknowledging any Thing incredible, or contradictory in them, that, on the contrary, let them seem never so hard, there are such amazing Proofs for the Veracity of them,

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tion might follow what a most wise Law-giver, such as *Moses* cannot be denied to have been, thought fit, and proper for them: And for the religious ones, they all tend to teach a stiff-necked Race the Way of Obedience; neither can they be said to inspire any other, than a profound Veneration towards God, and his Commandments.

I AM not ignorant, that some Persons have been so impudently bold, as to advance, that there is nothing in all the *Old Testament*, which inculcates the Hopes of eternal Life; but that all the Promises of it run upon the Blessings of this Life, proposing nothing but temporal Rewards and Encouragements, as the best adapted to such a carnal and earthly People: But can this be said by any one, who has but read the Writings and Lives of the Prophets, which make up a great Part of the *Old Testament*? Or, Can there be any Thing more Divine, than what holy *David* sings in Praise of his God? This shews, that there is a great Want of Reflexion, or something else, when such Things are advanced: Neither would it do the Deists any Good, if it were true; since the new Law is properly the Law of Grace.

THERE

THERE are others, who pretend to make an Objection against Christianity, of the infinite Sects and Divisions among the Christians themselves; and the Difficulty of knowing which is the true Faith taught by Christ, so necessary for Salvation: Others object the wicked Lives of those very Christians so diametrically opposite to what they profess, and by that Means endeavour to skreen their own Vices by the Authority, Practice, and Multitude of evil Doers: Others, in fine, asserting *that vastly extensive Principle* of believing what a *well-meaning Conscience* (for which we must take their own bare Word) thinks fit; and are, for the most Part, so extremely charitable, as to maintain, that every Religion in every Country is as good as their own; which last I will not dispute. However, though most of these Points belong to another Place, it may be said, in short, as to the first, that if it were once granted, as it is certain in itself, that Jesus Christ was sent by God, and his immediate Authority, to teach the World his true Worship, it were an easy Matter to mark out, who are the true Followers of that Divine Institution. To the second it is also easy to prove, that the Wickedness of Christians, of what Degree or Charac-

ter soever, is no Argument to prove the Nullity of that Religion; unless with those who are ready to lay hold of any Twig to save a sinking Cause; or, unless one Wickedness can be a just Excuse for another. As to the third, if that charitable Principle were credible, presuming the Patrons of it to be yet Christians, it follows from it, that not only the present Christians, but even Christ himself, with his Disciples, and the first Founders of Christianity, were very much in the Wrong to take such Pains, even at the Expence of their Lives, in planting the Gospel, and preaching that Unity of Faith so necessary for Salvation, if *what* any one thinks *fit* will suffice.

LASTLY, There remains one more Objection, thought by some long-sighted People very considerable; though, for my Part, I can see no great Weight in it: It is the Fable of the *Pre-Adamites*. The Authors of it would have us believe, that *Adam* was only the first Man, that was taken Notice of, of the *Jewish Race*; neither is it unlikely, say they, but that the *African* Negroes are of a different Species from other Men; if so, the Fall of *Adam* is a mere Engine of Priestcraft. Answer, I am sure the Priests are mere Tools, if they

they had no better Engines for the Support of their Religion, than the Deists have against it: But, it is very natural to enquire of these Gentlemen, what Proofs they have for such an extravagant Supposition? The most they can bring, is a bare, out-of-the-way Conjecture, which is just as easily denied, as asserted: Neither would I have mentioned such Whims, only some People would have them pass for Matter of Fact. As for the *Pre-Adamites*, the first Occasion of that Fable was an obscure Place in *Genesis*, confuted by the whole Body of the History, from which it took its Rise; for nothing can be more certain, than that the *Old Testament* asserts in Terms, that the Origin of all Men sprang from *one Pair* immediately created by God; nor can any other History in the World stand in Competition with it, for its Antiquity and Veracity. The Colour of the *Africans* and *Indians* is, without Doubt, the Effect of the Climate, and other natural Dispositions thereto concurring. Beside, it is Matter of Fact, that in Proportion as Countries approach those Climates, the more they draw upon the Black or Tawney; and though some People under the same Position may not be

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of the same Hue, I presume, other Causes might be assigned, without multiplying Species for mere *Accidents*.

IN fine, if any should imagine, that this visible World, with the Inhabitants thereof, had no Beginning from any one, but existed from all Eternity (How from all Eternity, without any distinct Cause!) with a never to be exhausted Series of Men and Animals *à Parte ante*, &c. Answer, That inconceivable System has been sufficiently destroyed by the Works of the Learned against the Atheists, overwhelmed with its own infinite Absurdities, and is directly overturned by all the Arguments for the Divine Institution of Christianity; wherefore, waving Philosophical Disputes in this Place, it is certain, that no Computation of the Duration of the World comes so nigh, and natural to the Matter, as that of the Scripture: The Accounts of the *Chaldeans, Egyptians, Chineses, Brackmans, &c.* are now rejected by the Learned, as merely fabulous: Nay, we may yet trace the Age of the World upwards, by the Remains of History and Tradition, spreading of Colonies, Invention of Arts and Sciences, &c. till we come very nigh its Infancy, agreeably to the Scripture Account, as nigh, as it is morally possible it should do,

SOME

SOME People frame a groundless Difficulty against Christianity, from the new Discoveries found out in the System of the World. The Reason of this Objection is, because our modern Philosophers have not only established as certain, the Motion of the Earth round the Sun, accounting the former as one of the Planets; but also that our System, as they call it, *i. e.* the vast Diameter of the solar Globe in the Center, the *Magnus Orbis* of the Earth, with its immense Circumference, the Diameters and Orbits of the rest of the Planets, and the prodigious Space contained therein, is but a very small Portion of the total System, or rather Systems of the Universe, where the fixed Stars, say they, are so many Suns to so many new Worlds; which, without all Doubt, must have new Planets, new Moons, new Earths peopled with their proper Inhabitants, as our Planet Earth is. What can hinder us from imagining, that those vast Bodies are inhabited, as well as ours? For what other Design could they be made? We see *Saturn* and *Jupiter* have their Satellites, or Moons, to supply the Want of the Sun, as our Moon does to us; nay, we ourselves are a Moon to the Men in the Moon; with a great many other Things of the like Nature. Now, if

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those vast Orbs are inhabited, as some wise Men conjecture they are, From what *Adam* did these Men spring? The Reader must pardon this seemingly impertinent Objection; since some People have almost *conjectured* themselves into a Belief of them.

ANSWER. *First*, That no Discoveries whatsoever, either made, or to be made, can ever invalidate the Truth of the Christian Religion, founded on the immediate Authority of the God of the Universe. *2dly*, That our present Business is, not to meddle with the physical System of the World, much less to find Fault with the really great and wonderful Discoveries, which have been made in Nature, by the ingenious Labours of several great Men, both of this, and the last Age: The chief Business is with the *Inhabitants* of these new Worlds; of whom it may be said, that if these Gentlemen Conjecturers can give us any Account of the Fact; what Sort of Inhabitants they are, whether of human Species, or how they can live in such inexpressible Extremity of Heat and Cold, as some of the Planets are liable to; whence they came, how they got thither, whether rational, or irrational, with a great many other curious Questions one might ask in one's Turn concerning them; why

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why then, indeed, it might look something like a Difficulty; but till these Questions are resolved, it may be very well let alone: For it is certain, we can have no Idea of such Inhabitants, who must be Ice, or Salamanders, not any Descendants of *Adam*; and therefore quite out of the Question. If the Sun's almost unextinguishable Fire be the Centre of the World, it may happen to be Hell; wherefore I would have some People not to be too curious about it.

Thus we are come to the End of the most obvious Objections against Christianity; if some of them seem a little difficult at first Sight, when they are only looked upon on one Side, nevertheless they can have no Weight, when they are put in the Balance with the invincible Proofs for the Divine Institution of that Religion; beside the unnatural Incoherencies they contain in themselves, when they are stripped of their Appearances, and examined by the Standard of right Reason. It is a common Saying, That all Systems are strong, when they object, and weak when they are impugned; but Christianity is invincible every Way; the strongest Reasons that can be brought against it, run into Tendencies unworthy of Men of Penetration;

tion; if its Mysteries seem hard to comprehend, they bring most amazing Credentials along with them, and are enforced by Arguments the most convincing; so that it may be said, in some Sense, that it is as great a Mystery to believe Christianity could be a *Cheat*, as any the Deists can call in Question.

SECTION V.

A Corollary by way of Conclusion of the Whole, viz. That the Deists can invent NO SYSTEM to serve their Turns.

WHAT is meant by a System to serve the Deists Turns, is a System indulgent to *Liberty*, and at the same Time *rational*. The Liberty which the Deists require, as far as a Man may guess by their *Theory* and *Practice*, is two-fold: A *Liberty* of *Free-thinking*, and a *Liberty* of *Free-acting*: By the first they would discard all Mysteries in Religion; or, in other

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other Words, every Thing that ought to captivate our Understanding in Obedience to Faith. By the second they would throw off the heavy *Clog of Morality*; or, at least, reduce it to so inconsiderable a Weight, that they may run on smoothly in the Way of all Flesh. Now, there is a particular Drift in this System: There are, and always have been, very great Free-thinkers, and very great Free-actors; but then they never troubled themselves with the *Good*, the *Just*, the *Rational*, &c. in any Thing they did; whereas our modern Unbelievers have a Mind to pass for the most rational Men in the World; nay, they would almost set up for Converters, only Pains and Labour do not so well square with their System; at least, they are so charitable, as to declare, that there is no rational System but their own; that all the rest is mere Bigotry and Priestcraft; and as about Half an Age ago the greatest Villains had the Address to pass for the greatest Saints; so some of these Gentlemen would endeavour to make us believe, that the greatest Liberties are the true Dictates of right Reason.

BUT it is to be hoped, such a Blot on human Nature will not subsist long: They can invent no System, nor any Engines to

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uphold it, but what will fall infinitely short of their Ends and Designs; since, whatever Way they turn themselves, they will be still obnoxious to much greater Difficulties, than any they can bring against Christianity: I say *greater*, considering and comparing the invincible Proofs for that Religion, with the absolute *Inconsistency* of Deism. This will better appear, by running over the different Schemes our modern Deists can frame to themselves.

FIRST, I believe the Deists will not pretend to set up any other *Divine Revelation* in Opposition to Christianity; neither can any other System in the World pretend to it, if Christianity cannot: No, the very Name of Revelation makes them sick; so there is no Danger of their setting up any other.

SECONDLY, I presume, neither *Judaism*, *Mahometanism*, the Religion of the *Brackmans*, and *Indians*, East, or West; or, in fine, any of the old *Pagan* Systems, will serve their Turn; at least, in *England*; or, till a late Author's Scheme has built them Mosques, Synagogues, and Temples, according to the Project of his *Nazarenus*.

THIRDLY, If, as they have a Mind to reduce all to human Policy, they affect
the

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the Glory of inventing a *new religious Scheme* of *Politicks*; even there they are out-done by the Christians; they are very sensible of it; and one may defy all the Deists in the World to hammer out of their own Brain, any Scheme, either so well concerted in its Designs, so successful in its Undertakings, so unshaken in its Principles, so permanent in its Establishment, so invincible in its Combats, or so glorious in its Triumphs over all its Opponents, as Christianity is, and will be so to the End of the World, in Spight of all their Efforts against it: And, what makes it more wonderful, the *Ways* and *Means* it makes use of for its Establishment, are diametrically opposite to all those Arts and Engines, the Deists can put in Practice: So that we may depend upon it, they will never succeed in such a System, till their Constitutions can bear, as well as do, what the first Authors of Christianity underwent. And when all is done, the principal Assistance will be wanting, I mean the Finger of God, by which the Christian Religion still triumphs over all its Opposers. However, not to go farther from Home, let us take the particular Systems, which have been, or are at present, in Vogue in our own Country, and see, whether

ther any of them will serve the Deists Turn.

FIRST, Atheism, which agrees perfectly well with their Liberty, and perhaps Inclinations too; but then it is utterly inconsistent with Reason; and upon that Score is rejected, at least openly, by most, and disowned by others.

SECONDLY, Epicureanism, which establishes a God in Words, and takes him away in Fact; this cannot hold with them, because it has too near a Connexion with Atheism; is obnoxious to several of the same Absurdities; besides the irrefragable Arguments for an all-wise and provident Governor of the Universe: And, in short, a lazy, impotent, or ignorant God, is no God at all.

THIRDLY, A System which only acknowledges an all-wise Governor over the material Part of the World, but supposed to take no Care of the *moral Part* of it, is little better than Epicureanism, and with it may be reduced to Atheism: Besides its absolute Inconsistency with right Reason, it has likewise all the Arguments for the Obligations of Morality, the eternal Differences between Good and Evil, and the innumerable Absurdities flowing from the Denial

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Denial of such Differences, directly against it.

FOURTHLY, To acknowledge a God, who takes Care of the World, with all its Causes and Effects, both *moral* and *physical*; and at the same Time to deny the Obligations of Morality, and Duties of a good Life, is to talk Contradictions: For how can God be said to take Care of the moral Part of the World, if there are no moral Duties in Being?

FIFTHLY, To acknowledge the eternal Obligations of Morality, in regard of God, our Neighbours, and ourselves, with the essential Differences of Good and Evil; and yet to live, as if there were no such Thing, is to be condemned by their own Principles.

SIXTHLY, To acknowledge a State, wherein these Obligations may be infringed, and Men stand guilty of the greatest Enormities in the Eyes of an all-just God; and yet to maintain, that the same all-just God takes no Cognizance of such Crimes, neither in this World, nor the next, in order to make a just Equality, and Compensation for the Goods and Evils of this Life, is likewise inconsistent with the Notion of a God, and the most just Idea we can have of him, as the common Father of all.

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all. It is true, some, or all of these Systems may be consistent with one Part of the Deists Projects, *i. e.* an universal Liberty of Free-acting; but then they will not do with the other, *i. e.* they *clash* with right Reason, and, by Consequence, will not serve their Turns in that Respect. Well, but put the Case there were,

SEVENTHLY, A System merely natural, which, *first*, acknowledges a God to be worshipped by all Men. *2dly*, A strict Morality to be observed in all our Actions. *3dly*, A watchful Providence over the same Actions. *4thly*, Rewarding Good, and punishing Evil. *5thly*, In an everlasting Immortality. So far such a System is not irreconcilable with Reason in itself, and is the best a Heathen can frame; but then it has a Number of Inconveniences, which will not suit with the Deists Inclinations: As,

FIRST, Because by such a System the Deists are obliged to be as *sober*, as *just*, as *virtuous*, as *chaste*, as *regular* in all Duties of Morality, as if they were Christians: Here is *Free-acting* quite cut off. *2dly*, Such a System confirms the one Half of Christianity; and, indeed, the most laborious Part of it. *3dly*, Though the principal Duties of natural Religion are in themselves

themselves evidently obligatory; yet there has always seemed to be something wanting, to enforce the Practice of them: All your ancient Legislators and Philosophers could never do it; they were still deficient in something or other; beside their own Vices, and capricious Sentiments, as various as their Authors. If the Deists will not be convinced of this, let them go and preach up their natural System, as they affect to call it, and see, what Power of itself it will have to reform the World. Why then, *4thly*, such a System as cannot enforce its due Practice, must either be ineffectual, or depend upon some more Divine Authority enforcing it; I mean, as to the interior, where Virtue is seated, not the exterior Practice, which may sometimes be kept in Awe by coercive Laws, Interest, and Hypocrisy. But, *5thly*, this will bring us back to a supernatural Power. Neither, *6thly*, did we ever see, as in Effect there never was, or ever will be, any natural System coming up to the Purity and Perfection in its Morals and Principles, as is taught by the Christian Religion. Nor, *7thly*, can any natural Authority *sufficiently* determine all the particular Points, Men are obliged to believe, and practise, in that Multiplicity and Difficulty of the Objects occurring in

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the Duties of Life. Nor, *8thly*, can Men in this present State ever live up to all the Particulars of those Duties, so as to fulfil all Obligations in regard of God, their Neighbour, and themselves, without the Assistance of Grace, which their merely natural System cannot give them; though, perhaps, they may comply with the more obvious and easy Part of them. Nor, *9thly*, can they expect any supernatural Rewards, for what they do merely in Compliance with natural and human Motives. *10thly*, and *lastly*, Beside these intrinsic and essential Inconveniences, the Sufficiency of such a natural System is entirely overthrown by the Mission of Jesus Christ, and all those innumerable Arguments, which prove, he was sent from God to plant the true Law of Virtue and Sanctity upon Earth; if any natural and human Authority had been sufficient to have secured the eternal Salvation of Mankind, Can one think God Almighty would have wrought such Wonders and Miracles (the Facts being already proved) to convince Men of the contrary? Not to insist, that all those who were saved before the Coming of Jesus Christ, were saved in View of the Redemption he was to pay for them. Wherefore, before the Deists begin to preach up their natural System, they must on the one Hand establish its Sufficiency
to

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to make Men *eternally happy*; and take off all the Inconveniences to which it is liable, both in regard of this World, and the next: No inconsiderable Task, as may be seen, by what has been already said. And on the other Hand, they must bear the Brunt of all the Arguments, not only for the Necessity of Revelation, but for the Matter of Fact of it; which will render it one of the most formidable Attempts, as ever was undertaken by Men: The Force of which Arguments all the Artifices of Infidels can never invalidate.

H E R E are some of the Difficulties against any natural System the Deists can frame, which chiefly regard the *practical Part*. There are others, which relate to the Understanding; and which will convince them, that for all their great Aversion to Mysteries in Religion, they must *captivate* their Reason, and submit to the Belief of several Points, perhaps as much above their Reach and Comprehension, as any of the Mysteries of Christianity. For to say nothing of first *Causes* in natural Things, where, let us take whatever Side we please, we are always in the Midst of incomprehensible Mysteries, involved in Darkness almost impenetrable, and attacked on all Sides with insuperable Difficul-

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ties; not to say manifest Contradictions: To pass over the *Rebuffs*, and Humiliations our proud Reason meets with, when we come to explain the least Atom, let us see, what the Deists are obliged to hold, even without *comprehending* it, in their own natural System.

FIRST, They must believe an *eternal Cause* existing of *itself*, without any Beginning à *Parte ante*, and without Ending à *Parte post*. 2dly, They must believe the *Creation* of *Matter*, or make it *self-existent*; which will come very nigh making a God of it. 3dly, They must believe the Existence of Evil, with all the Consequences attending it; and *that* too, consistent with the Belief of an infinite, all-powerful, all-just, good Principle; without this, their pretended System falls in Pieces. 4thly, Beside the incomprehensible Essence of God, the Infinity of all his Attributes, likewise incomprehensible, they must believe infinite Justice, and infinite Mercy, compatible in the same Being, or else they make a Chimera, instead of a God. 5thly, They must believe an eternal *Fore-knowledge* of all Things, good and bad, as they were, and are to happen till the World's End: But how this can be without *eternal Decrees*, effective, or permissive, for every Event;

Event; or how those Decrees can be reconcileable with our *free* Will, with which every Man is endowed, as we are convinced by our own undeniable Experience, is not so easily comprehended; yet there must be in God a Fore-knowledge of all Things, or else he must be ignorant; not to say any Thing, why he did not prevent the Evils he foresaw. All this the Deists must believe, and account for, as well as the Christians. *6thly*, They must believe God to be really and physically immutable in himself (otherwise he would not be infinitely perfect) notwithstanding the various Effects produced, and producible by him; and the Difficulty there is of reconciling this with an essentially *free Agent*, as God must be. *7thly*, Not to dwell too long on a Subject, that can never be exhausted, they must believe an eternal Providence over the World, disposing all Things for the best; notwithstanding the vast Inequality conspicuous in human Affairs; with all the other Difficulties that occur in explaining and reconciling the Particulars; and infinite other Things necessarily following from the bare Belief of a God, as demonstrable against the Atheists; yet these Gentlemen are for *no Mysteries in Religion!*

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IF they say, that though we cannot comprehend these Points and Difficulties, yet natural Reason convinces us, they must be true, because they follow from an undeniable Principle, *viz.* the Existence of a God infinitely perfect: So the Christians say in like Manner, that though we cannot comprehend some Mysteries in Christianity; yet natural Reason convinces us, that what God reveals to us, cannot be false: And on the other Hand, the incontestable Proofs for Christianity, when they are duly proposed, will not permit a Man to doubt rationally, but that God has revealed those Mysteries.

THUS, *no System*, to be properly called DEISM, can be invented by the Deists, which will serve their *Turns* in all Respects; for let them frame what System they please, consistent with Reason, they must either captivate their proud Understanding, or reform their Lives.

THERE may be some other modern Systems reducible to Deism, as modern Deism is to Atheism: For Example, Those who pretend, that Christianity itself is not *mysterious*, &c. rejecting, on that Account, the Belief of the Trinity, the Mission and Incarnation of the Son of God, as such; or, who would make the Rights of the Christian

Christian Church, to consist in what the chief Magistrate shall determine, provided always that themselves make a Part of it: But, since the Patrons of these Novelties pretend to believe the Scriptures, with all the real, and doctrinal Parts of it, they cannot be properly called Deists; though, in Effect, their Principles tend very naturally to the Destruction of all Religion; of whom one may say in general, that beside the Difficulties which fall so heavy on Deism, they have others peculiar of their own, and those very great ones too: Since, without entering into any further Particulars, it may be safely said, that whoever pretends, that Christianity is not mysterious in their Sense; or dreams, that such Tenets, mentioned just now, may be the true Sense of the Scripture; himself advances one of the most unintelligible Mysteries, or at least Paradoxes, as even the Deists can call in Question.

FROM what has been said throughout the Body of this Treatise, it is certain, that the Deists must be prodigiously blinded with *Prejudices*, in regard of the most important Truths; and that *that* formidable Cry of Prejudice, first Impressions, Force of Education, imbibed Principles, &c. must entirely fall upon themselves:

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For when we consider the natural Arguments for the Existence of a God, the necessary Consequences following from thence, inferring not only the Obligations of his Worship, but also those in regard of our Neighbours, and ourselves, with all the Consequences attending them, and the invincible Proofs for his Goodness and Mercy, in revealing to us the particular Points of his Law, in the Institution of the Christian Religion, it is a natural Conviction to Men of Sense and Penetration, that nothing but the Spirit of an affected Liberty could make People act contrary to such indispensable Duties. But when we reflect on the Tendency of their Principles, that they sap the very Foundation of all Morality, human Society, Fidelity, and even common Safety; flattering, at the same Time, the most vicious Inclinations and Passions of Men; nay, endeavouring to persuade them, that they are all good and lawful, the most charitable Thought we can have of them, is, that evil Company and Conversation has not only corrupted their Manners, but blinded their Understanding.

To conclude, therefore, if the Deists were Men to be converted, I would now exhort them to consider the Fallaciousness
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of any System of Religion they can frame, unless they will be Christians, and the dismal Consequences of their Errors: I would put them in mind of the Dangers they are in, if there should be any revealed Religion, as there certainly is: I would lay before them the Unprofitableness of their Tenets, which can only ease them of a few speculative Difficulties, they being indispensably obliged to the Laws of Morality, by the Consequences of their own Principles: I would expose to their View the most certain State of a Life to come, where there must be due Rewards and Punishments, and a just Compensation for the Goods and Evils of this Life: I would endeavour to make them sensible of the just Judgments of God, who will not be derided and mocked by them to the End: I would put them in mind of that dreadful Tribunal, before which we must all appear, to answer to the Accounts of the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, who will let nothing pass unexamined under his all-wise and just Government. In a Word, I would beg them by that Justice and Mercy, which they yet abuse, by that Truth which they contemn, and by the eternal Goods from which they exclude themselves, to *examine* once more the Grounds

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of their Infidelity, and see, whether they can be put in Balance with the Authority of God himself, notified to us in the Dispensation of the Gospel. But if they are Proof against all this, they must lay aside all Pretensions to Reason, in what they profess, and own ingenuously, that it is this World they seek, and nothing else; Then, though we may deplore their Blindness, we might believe their Sincerity.

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